

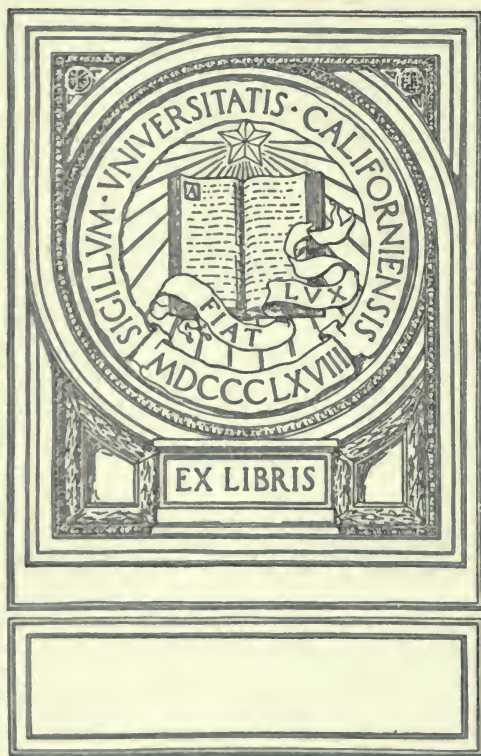
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***Brownson's Defence.***

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**DEFENCE**

OF THE ARTICLE ON THE

**LABORING CLASSES.**

FROM THE

**BOSTON QUARTERLY REVIEW.**

By **O. A. BROWNSON.**

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## DEFENCE.

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As a general rule we never reply to what is written or said against ourselves personally, or the views we from time to time put forth. We adopt this rule, because we never have, in what we write, any regard to our own personal reputation. We write not for fame; and we cannot believe it a matter of any moment to the world, what estimation we may be held in by the public generally. We manage our own conduct according to our judgment or inclination, without disquieting ourselves in the least with the opinions which others may entertain of it. If it suits them, it is well; if it does not suit them, it is perhaps just as well.

We also adopt this rule, because we are never so desirous of establishing any set of opinions, as we are of stimulating to free and fearless inquiry into all great and interesting subjects. We believe that we love truth better than we do our own opinions; and if truth be elicited, we care little what becomes of the opinions we may have set forth. We therefore throw out our opinions freely, perhaps rashly, and leave them to be canvassed by the public mind, confident that in the long run they will receive all the merit they deserve.

But as we wish to give with fuller details our views on several important matters, we shall in this instance depart from our general rule, and reply at some length to the principal objections we have heard urged against the article on the Laboring Classes, published in this Journal for July last. These objections we

shall generalize, and discuss without any reference to the individuals or publications that have urged them.

I. One objection urged against us is, not that the doctrines of our article are unsound, but that now is not the time for putting them forth. The public mind, it is said, is not prepared for them, and therefore will not give them a favorable reception. They will bring much reproach upon him who puts them forth, and that reproach will necessarily fall, to a greater or less extent, upon his friends, and the political party with which he may be associated.

This objection resolves itself into two; one relating to the proper time for bringing out one's ideas; and the other to the obligation of a man to withhold what he believes to be great truths, for fear of compromising a party with which he may sometimes act. We shall consider the last first.

1. For ourselves, we acknowledge no party organization as obligatory, no party usages that we are bound to support. Party with us is never supported for its own sake, and claims our attention never as an end, but simply as a means to an end.

Where there are differences of opinions, there will be different parties. A certain portion of our citizens believe the public good requires one set of political measures to be adopted; another portion decide in favor of another set of measures. Those who favor the one set constitute by that fact a party; those who favor another set constitute another party. This is all the partyism we recognise as legitimate. We approve no measure because it is the measure of this or that party. It is not the party that recommends the measure, but the measure that recommends the party. Those who approve the measure unite to carry it, and act as a party; but they are bound together as a party only by the fact, that they have a common end in view. We have supported the democratic party, on some occasions, because we have approved its measures; but in so doing we have never given it any pledge of indiscriminate support,—no assurance that we would

support it, let it put forth what measures it might, or that we would refrain from suggesting any measures, which it might not be prepared to approve. We come to it as freemen, and give it a free voluntary support where we believe it right; but we reserve to ourselves the same freedom of thought and action we should have, had we nothing to do with it. We have surrendered nothing to it; given it no right over us; and therefore no claim, as a party, to chastise us when we offend it. These remarks will disclose our general views in regard to responsibility to party.

Now, we apprehend that a doctrine, opposite to this, prevails to a considerable extent. We think that many among us would organize a party, and make its members believe and feel that their chief merit, in a political sense, consists in fidelity to it. Their maxim is, "Go with your party. Everything in a free country must be managed by party. Be therefore true to your party. Adhere to its usages, and support its measures and its nominations." The men who wish to stand high with their party, therefore, consult not what is truth, but what is the creed of the party; not what is true policy, but what policy the party will sustain; not who are the best and fittest men to be voted for, but who will best secure the suffrages of the party. This is the popular doctrine of party, and a doctrine, which, we need not say, we utterly detest, let it be sustained by whom or by what party it may.

This doctrine makes the support of party the end and not the means; reverses the natural order of things, and leads to the most mischievous results. It strikes at the very foundation of freedom, by rendering every individual a slave to his party. No matter what our convictions are, no matter what our wishes are for our country or our race, we must lock them up in our own bosoms, till our party in its wisdom is prepared to receive them, and to act on them. Nor is this all. Let it once be understood that the members of a party are to support it, whatever the measures it puts forth, and that the great mass of the individuals composing it are never to venture any suggestions on



their individual responsibility, and you leave the whole party to be wielded according to the caprice or the interest of the some half a dozen individuals, who can adroitly place themselves at its head. A party in this case is merely an army under the control and ready to follow the beck of a few, perhaps designing, unprincipled chiefs. The way is thus paved for introducing and screening the grossest corruption, — corruption which shall prey upon the vitals of the body politic, and threaten its very existence.

But if we are to support measures because they are the measures of our party, and not the party because it supports our measures, who, we would ask, is to determine what shall be the measures of our party? Who shall dictate its measures, and authoritatively declare its creed? The demagogues at its head, who are looking only to their own aggrandizement? — individuals who hold the party merely as the instruments of their will? So, doubtless, the ambitious and designing would have it; but not so would a true democrat have it. No democrat can consent to let half a dozen men cut and dry the policy they may choose, and then demand his support on peril of being branded as a renegade if he withhold it. He knows no dictators of opinions. He asks not what this president or that governor, this senator or that representative believes, in order to ascertain what it will answer for him to advance. He makes up his mind from the best lights within his reach, and acts accordingly.

The mere success of a party is never a legitimate end to be sought. No man then owes any allegiance to a party as such. He then needs never ask whether the views he puts forth will, or will not, compromit his party. He is simply bound, according to the best of his judgment and ability, to refrain from aught that may injure the cause he has at heart; and if the present success of any given party be indispensable to the success of that cause, then, and for that reason only, should he refrain from doing aught to compromit that party. But we know so little of what is or is not indispensable to the success of any great

cause, we are such poor judges of what is expedient or inexpedient, that the wisest way, after all, is to speak out what we honestly believe to be just and true, without asking whom it will or will not compromise. Truth and justice are, so far as we have been able to learn, the best expedients. Ask not then how what a man has uttered, will affect your sect or your party; but merely ask, is what he advocates just and true?

We have made these remarks to show what is the light in which we regard fidelity and deference to party. We owe no responsibility to party. We sustain the leading measures of the democratic party, because we believe them essential to the welfare of the country; we sustain the democratic party generally, because it is through that party we hope to realize such legislative reforms, as are needed to carry out into practice the great doctrine of equality, to which the American people stand pledged. So far as that party puts forth such measures as we approve, we shall support it; so far as it, in our judgment, is faithful to American principles, it may always, wherever we are, count on our fidelity, and no farther. So far as it concerns political action, if we act at all, we shall probably always act with it, as our sympathies are not likely to go with the opposing party.

We speak here of action. But in the discussion of principles, in putting forth measures, we pay no regard to it; never have consulted, and never shall consult it. Here we take ground above all party, above the people even, and ask simply what is true? what is right? what ought to be? Here we follow our own convictions, speak from our own minds, without "conferring with flesh and blood." We here aim to exercise that freedom of mind, that "soul-liberty," which many others so eloquently defend. For ourselves, we claim the right of free thought, and free utterance. We rarely undertake to defend this right; we exercise it. And we believe it the duty of every man to exercise it, and that he is no true man who will not exercise it. We feel nothing but pity for the miserable coward, who dares not utter a thought, till he has

obtained the license of his sect, his school, or his party. Away with such abjectness. Be men, thinking your own thoughts, and speaking your own words. No sect or party is or can be deserving of your support, that requires you to abandon your freedom of mind, or to suppress the utterance of your own honest convictions.

2. With regard to the objection, that now is not the time for bringing out such doctrines as we have advanced, we have not much to say. If now is not the time, it must be either because there are more important matters to be discussed; or because those doctrines cannot now be fairly brought out; or because their utterance at this time may bring reproach upon him who utters them. The last consideration is purely personal, and therefore does not concern the public. A man, who utters a doctrine, is or ought to be prepared to brave the consequences of uttering it. He, who can be deterred from publishing a truth through fear of reproach, is a coward, a traitor to both God and man, and has no claim upon our sympathy or respect. We shall defend no such man.

As it concerns the second consideration, no man can tell whether his doctrines will be comprehended or not, till he has published them. As a general rule it is always safe for a man to infer, that what he can fully comprehend himself, may be communicated to his contemporaries. It is not well for a man to believe himself so far superior to those around him, that his thoughts, clearly uttered, must be unintelligible to them.

There may be more important matters than those we discussed in our article on the Laboring Classes. Of that each one must judge for himself. The less should undoubtedly be postponed to the greater. But what seems the greater to one mind, may seem the less to another. "But just at this time, when an important election is pending, it was injudicious to start a new and exciting topic of discussion." Perhaps so. But we have never believed that anything we could write would have much influence on an elec-



tion ; and we are sure that we would never willingly triumph in an election, however important we might regard it, if our triumph could be endangered by the fearless utterance of what we held to be a great truth ; although the application of that truth might be far in the distant future. A triumph, won by the suppression of any truth, is more dishonorable and disastrous than a defeat.

The proper time for uttering a doctrine, it strikes us, is whenever we clearly perceive it, and are fully convinced of its truth and importance ; when we feel it pressing heavily upon our hearts, and hear it in loud and earnest tones demanding to be uttered. The world is lying in wickedness ; great social wrongs obtain ; man is everywhere suffering by the hand of man ; and what are they doing, who should be bold and invincible Reformers ? They are trimming their sails to the breeze, and crying out to him, whose soul burns with strong desire to emancipate his brethren, " Wait, wait. Now is not the time. Four months and then cometh the harvest. Be prudent, manage adroitly. You ruin everything by going too fast. Slacken your pace." Now, we have heard enough of this timid counsel. We are indignant at it ; and in the language of Jesus, we say, " Lift up your eyes, look on the fields ; for, behold, they are white already to the harvest." There is the enemy, fortifying his camp and concentrating his forces ; unfurl your banners ; let the drums beat ; march, rush, storm his entrenchments, and compel him to surrender at discretion. Always is it the time to war against sin and Satan ; always is it the time to proclaim the truth, and discomfit error.

A plain, open, honest avowal of truth is always the shortest, as well as the surest, road to victory. In a moral war, we have no faith in stratagems. We want no plotting and counter-plotting, no feints, no ambuscades. Raise aloft, and give to the breeze the broad banner of Truth. With it you may march alone and single-handed through the enemy's camp, and overcome it. Care not for his bullets. They may whistle about your ears, pierce your garments, and


penetrate your body even; but they cannot wound you. You may be crushed to the earth, but you shall be renewed by the fall, and rise with fresh courage and energy to the combat. For, carry you not the banner of God? And does God need to plot, mine, and undermine, in order to gain his victories? No. He goes forth in his simple majesty, and terror seizes his enemies; their souls fail them; and they are as so many dead men. So in the simple majesty of truth should all go forth, who would redeem the world. Away, then, with all this cant about time and place. Know that Truth is her own time and place. Let the world but see her face, and it is reconstructed in her image.

If the doctrines we put forth in our article on the Laboring Classes were true, they were timely put forth. If you object not to the doctrines themselves, be ashamed to object to the time when they were promulgated. If you regard them as untrue, unsound, refute them; use your zeal and energy in proving them false; not in proving their publication inopportune. Rely upon it, that such doctrines will always be inopportune to those whom they indict; never to any others.

II. A second objection urged against us is, that we propose to abolish Christianity. This objection is founded on a perversion of our language, and is warranted by nothing that we have ever written in our Review. Ten years ago this very autumn, we publicly announced our conversion to the Christian Faith, and since then we have uttered, as we have entertained, no doubt of the truth of the Christian Religion. No man in this community has preached or written more, during these last ten years, to defend Christianity, and to defend it not only against the Infidel, but also against the Church, than the Editor of this Review. It would therefore be much more modest in his traducers to distrust their own interpretation of his language, than to charge him with hostility to Christianity.

1. That we distinguish between the Christianity of the Church, and the Christianity of Christ, that we hold the former in low esteem, while we love and reverence the latter, we have no disposition to deny. We claim the right of interpreting Christianity for ourselves, as we readily concede to others, and to the best of our ability defend to others, their right to interpret it for themselves. That our interpretations are not precisely orthodox, may very possibly be true. To a large portion of the Christian world our views are doubtless heretical. After the manner which many call heresy, we confess that we worship the God of our fathers. But that is our affair, and not theirs. We have not asked them to mediate between us and our God, nor have we proposed to mediate for them. We can manage the matter of our acceptance with our Maker, without their assistance, as they doubtless can that of theirs without ours. And yet, as heretical as we may be, our writings contain distinct avowals of our belief in the divine inspiration of the Old and New Testaments; in the reality of the Christian Miracles; the Deity of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost; in the Trinity; the Fall of Man, and his corruption by Sin; the Atonement; Justification by Faith; Spiritual Regeneration; Immortality, and Rewards and Punishments in the world to come. All these doctrines have been distinctly recognised as truths, and commented on as such, in some one or other of our published writings. It would seem, then, that even in the opinion of the Christian world generally, our heresies are not of the sort termed "damnable."

Furthermore; in the very article in question, we say expressly, that "We are Christians, and that it is only by following out the Christian law, and the example of the early believers, that we can hope to effect anything." The second step we propose in the work of elevating the laboring classes is, we there say, "to resuscitate the Christianity of Christ." We must then be pardoned, if we entertain no great respect for those pious readers, who can infer from our





writings, that we proposed to elevate the proletariat by destroying Christianity.

Christianity we have always spoken of as friendly to, as commanding even, the moral and social elevation of the laboring classes. Democracy we have often defined to be nothing but the application of the principles of the Gospel to man's social and political relations. How could we, then, with this our acknowledged view of Christianity, seek its destruction as a means of effecting the social reform for which we were contending? All, who have done us the honor to read our writings, must admit, it seems to us, that our great object has all along been to Christianize the democracy, and to *democratize*, if we may use the word, the Church. We found, when we came upon the stage, the advocates of social reform at war with religion, and the friends of religion at war with the social reformers. At first, we fell into the common error of believing this the natural state of things, and accordingly accepted it, and joined in the opposition to religion. Subsequent inquiry convinced us that this was an unnatural state of things; that the hostility, between the social reformer and the advocate of religion, was accidental and not necessary,—the result of mutual misunderstanding. From that time up to the present moment, we have labored uniformly to reconcile the two.

In January, 1834, the writer of the article in question, published in the Unitarian, a periodical edited by the late lamented Bernard Whitman, an article written nearly a year previous, on "Christianity and Reform;" in which he "labors to prove that no salutary reform can be effected by infidelity, and that the spirit of reform is in fact the very spirit of the Gospel." We insert an extract which may serve to set this matter in its true light.

"That infidelity and the spirit of reform have sometimes been found in alliance, is not denied; but this alliance is unnatural, and has never produced anything worth preserving. Reformers have sometimes erred. Animated by a strong desire for human improvement, feeling an undying love for man,

they have freely devoted themselves to his emancipation, and to the promotion of his endless progress towards perfection; but they have not always had clear conceptions of what would be an improvement, of the good attainable, nor of the practicable means of attaining it. Their zeal may have flowed from pure hearts, but it has not always been guided by just knowledge. They have often excited needless alarm, waged needless war, declaimed when they should have reasoned, censured when they should have pitied and consoled, awakened resentment when they should have gained confidence, and attracted love. The consequence is, that they have been opposed by their natural friends, and this has obliged them to league with their natural enemies.

“In the contest, the reformer has excited the alarms of the religious, and armed against himself the guardians of the faith. He has met the minister of the Church, commanding him in the name of God to desist, and assuring him that if he take another step forward, he does it at the peril of his soul’s salvation. When the French Reformer rose against the mischievous remains of the feudal system, and the severe exactions of a superannuated tyranny, he found the Church leagued with the abuses he would correct. Those who lived upon her revenues bade him retire. The anathema met his advance, and repelled his attack; and he was induced to believe that there was no place whereon to erect the palace of liberty and social order, but the ruins of the Temple.

“Yet his cause was most eminently a *religious* cause. It was not because the spirit of reform was an infidel spirit, that it was opposed by the professed friends of religion. All reforms come from the lower classes, who are always the sufferers; and they are usually opposed by the higher classes, who live by those very abuses, or who are the higher classes in consequence of those very abuses, which the reformer would redress. These classes, whether hereditary, elective, or fortuitous, — whether composed of the same individuals, or of different ones, — have always the same spirit, and the same interests. The old order of things is that which elevates them; and that order of things, they, of course, must feel it their duty to maintain. Hence it is that the upper classes of society, all who are under the direct influence of those classes, and all who hope one day to make a part of them, are almost always opposed to all radical changes, and consequently to all real reform. In most countries, the ministers of religion, especially the higher orders of the hierarchy, make up a part of the higher and privileged classes; and hence the reason why they oppose the reformer, and force him into the ranks of the un-

believer. They from their position feel no need of a reform in the moral and social institutions of the community, and hope nothing from a change; and they can but oppose it. They have always done so, and always will do so, till they are made sensible that they must lose all their influence and their means of benefiting themselves or others by continuing their opposition." \*

So we wrote and published in 1834, and this essay contains the germ of all we have since published on this subject. It has been with us a leading object to bring out, in as bold relief as possible, the great fact, that Jesus was a social reformer, that the aim of his mission was to establish the reign of equality on earth, as well as to secure salvation to the soul hereafter. If there is anything peculiar in our views, it is in the fact, that they aim to reconcile the disciple of Jesus and the social reformer, to bring out Christianity as a means of social reform, and to enlist the Church on the side of the down-trodden masses. We have been laboring in this country to do precisely what the Abbé de la Mennais has been laboring to do in France. Almost at the very moment he was writing his *Words of a Believer*, we, without knowing that there was such a man on earth, were writing our essay on Christianity and Reform, which advocates in sober prose, substantially the same doctrines that he has sent forth in his inspired poem.

We have, it is true, for many years been contending for a radical reform, not in politics and government only, but in society itself. Our democracy is of the most thorough-going sort. It embraces that of the democratic party, and sustains it; but it goes altogether beyond, and contemplates results, of which a large portion of that party have not as yet even dreamed. It goes, though not in the same direction, as far as Robert Owen, or Frances Wright proposed to go. But we differ from these notorious individuals, not only in our conceptions of what would be a true

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\* Unitarian, for January, 1834. Cambridge and Boston. pp. 36-38.



reform, but in the very important fact, that while they propose to remodel society without the aid of Christianity, and in opposition to it, we propose to remodel society by its aid, and in obedience to its law. ✓

We demand the most radical reforms ; but we demand them not in our own name, nor on our own authority ; but in the name and on the authority of God. Perhaps this is what has most offended our conservative brethren. It is taking them, we own, at a disadvantage ; and condemning them, as it were, out of their own mouths. But is this our fault ? They profess to be Christians ; they acknowledge the authority of the Christian law ; where then is the injustice of trying them by that law ? Grant that by proclaiming that law, and bringing them to its test, we strip off their masks, and compel them to stand out before the gaze of men, in their real character of infidels and sinners ; are we censurable for so doing ? Are we warring against Christianity, when we deprive the scribes and pharisees of our times of the comfortable assurance, that they are good Christians, and heirs of salvation, while they merely acknowledge Christ with their lips, but in their hearts, and in their lives, worship the flesh and the devil ? If our course disquiets them, they ought to blame, it would seem, themselves, not us. The severity of our preaching may be in their anti-christian conduct, not in the words we use.

We wish these scribes and pharisees, these chief priests, rulers in the synagogues, and principal men of the city, to understand that in our controversy with them we take Christian ground. In our own name we should not dare speak to them as we do ; but we speak to them in the name of our Master, and rebuke them from the height of the Christian pulpit. This is the ground we have assumed. We know well its advantages, and our conservative friends may rest assured, that we shall never voluntarily abandon it for the low and untenable ground of infidelity. They may dislodge us if they can ; but they may rely upon it, that it will always be in the name and on the authority of Christ, that we shall at-

tack them. They must vindicate their own claims to be regarded as Christians, before it will answer for them to call us infidels; especially before they will have the right to infer from the fact, that we oppose what they uphold, we are opposing Christianity. They may say that they are Christians; they may say that we misinterpret the Christian law; but we bid them lay their hands on their hearts, look us in the face, and say so if they can. We speak confidently here, for we have for us a witness, — an unimpeachable witness, — in their own breasts. Their own consciences accuse them of want of fidelity to the Gospel, and assure them that between their Christianity and that of Christ there is a great gulf, as wide and deep as that which separated the rich man in hell, from the poor beggar lodged by angels in Abraham's bosom. In the name of Christ, we have summoned the community to answer for its Christianity, to show that it is really Christian, or else to abandon its pretensions to the Christian name. Is this infidelity? Then are we infidels. Is this to prove ourselves hostile to the Christianity of Christ? Then are we hostile to it.

2. But it is said that we oppose the Church, and it is very sagely inferred, that a man cannot oppose the Church, and be a friend to Christ. We admit that we oppose the Church, *as it now is*; we admit that we would abolish it; nay, that we are determined to do all in our power to abolish it; but we deny that we are therefore hostile to religion, or doing any disservice to the cause of Christian truth. We distinguish, as we have said, between the Christianity of the Church, and the Christianity of Christ. The former we have no respect for; the latter we love, and reverence, and seek to obey. The Christianity of the Church is merely a human institution, resting solely on human authority, and may be treated and judged of in like manner, as any other human institution; as may be the science of chemistry, for instance, of geology, or of astronomy. We owe it no allegiance, and admit not its right to command. But the Christi-

anity of Christ is the Word of God, and therefore rests on Divine authority. To it we bow as our legitimate sovereign, and feel that we are bound in conscience to do whatever it commands.

Furthermore; on what ground have we opposed the Church? On the ground that it is a Christian institution, upholding and giving currency to Christian principles and influences? Never. But solely on the ground that it is an *anti-christian* institution, which is at the present time a let and a hindrance to the spread of Christian truth, to the growth of God's kingdom in the soul, and on the earth. We oppose it, because we find no Divine authority for it; because we cannot discover that Jesus ever contemplated such an institution; and because we regard it as the grave of freedom and independence, and the hotbed of servility and hypocrisy. We oppose it because it does not recognise the spirit of Jesus, acknowledge the rights of the reason, and make it the religious duty of its members to raise up the bowed down, and set the captive free. Here are the grounds of our opposition to the Church; and surely we may oppose it on these grounds, without forfeiting our claims to faith in the Gospel, or fidelity to Christ. Were the Church the true body of Christ, did it truly represent him, labor unweariedly to establish God's kingdom, which is the reign of truth, justice, and love, on the earth, we should be the last to raise our voices against it, and foremost to give it all the support in our power. But the Church has become cold and lifeless; the Holy Ghost does not dwell in her midst; she has a form of godliness, but not its power; and by her deeds can no flesh be justified. We have studied too long in the school of Jesus, to be able to believe that a little psalm-singing, a little sermonizing, a little holy water, or consecrated bread or wine; can atone for sin, and enable the soul to stand up holy and acceptable in the sight of its Maker. What the Church enjoins is poor stuff, at best dead works, which cannot purge the conscience, or make the comers thereunto perfect. Give us *being* not *seeming*; give us a life of true active



holiness, a life that is spent in serving God by serving his children, a life that is not merely to be hereafter, but a life that now is,— a true eternal life, which realizes the kingdom of God wherever it is lived; not your vain shows, your hand-writing of ordinances and will-worship, which Jesus long ago nailed to his cross, and declared utterly worthless by the sacrifice of himself. When the Church lives this life, or shows that she has power to impart it, we will be her friend; till then we must oppose her, or cease to obey the Gospel.

III. A third objection, which we have heard urged against our views, is that we would abolish the priesthood, and dispense with all religious instruction, and all religious worship. To this objection we reply, that the inference drawn from what we have said against priests, is unwarranted. We stated expressly in the article so much abused, that we did not object to religious teachers, to religious instruction, nor to religious worship. We have ourselves officiated as a religious teacher, the greater part of the time for the last sixteen years, and regard ourselves now in the light of a religious teacher, as much as ever we did. We are as ready to preach now as ever we were, and trust to live and die a preacher of religion. The views, which we have lately put forth on the priesthood, and on religious worship, are precisely such as we have ever entertained, since we have had any views on the subject. We have preached them often, and frequently published them before.

But what are our views of the priesthood? To what did we in reality object, when we objected to the priesthood? These questions we can answer only by giving at some length our views of Christianity, as an outward, visible institution.

The mission of Jesus was twofold. One purpose of his mission was to atone for sin, and prepare the soul for heaven in the world to come. The other purpose was to found a holy kingdom on the earth, under the dominion of which all men should finally be brought.

This last purpose is the only one which concerns us in our present inquiry.

This holy kingdom, which Christ came to found on the earth, has been mistaken for the outward, visible Church; and the Church has therefore been held to be a spiritual body, a body corporate, independent in itself, and distinct from the body politic, civil society, or the State. This has given rise to a double organization of mankind; one for material interests called the State, and under the control of the civil government proper; the other for spiritual purposes, called the Church, and governed by laws and officers of its own, distinct from those of the State.

Now to this we strenuously object. We would establish the kingdom of God on the earth; but we would not have a *double* organization of mankind. We would have but a single organization; and this organization we would call not the Church, but the State. This organization should be based on the principles of the Gospel, and realize them as perfectly, as finite man can realize them.

The kingdom of God is an inward, spiritual kingdom. In plain language, it is the dominion of truth, justice, and love. Now, we would build up this kingdom not by founding an outward visible Church, but by cultivating the principles of truth, justice, and love, in the soul of the individual, and by bringing society and all its acts into perfect harmony with them. Our views, if carried out, would realize not a union, but the unity, the identity, of Church and State. They would indeed destroy the Church as a *separate* body, as a distinct organization; but they would do it by transferring to the State the moral ideas on which the Church was professedly founded, and which it has failed to realize. They would realize that idea of a "Christian Commonwealth," after which our Puritan fathers so earnestly and perseveringly struggled. They are nothing but the views of the first settlers of this state, developed and systematized, and freed from the theological phraseology in which they were then

expressed. We are true to their idea, to their spirit, and are laboring to realize that which they most desired. We therefore remind those who profess to reverence our Puritan ancestors, that they would do well to study the history and opinions of those ancestors, and forbear to censure us, till they are prepared to condemn them.\*

So much in reference to the Church as an organized body, as a spiritual society distinct from the civil society, the only sense in which we have ever opposed it, or thought of opposing it.

As it concerns religious worship, no man ever contended more strenuously for it than we do; but we do not, when we speak strictly, suffer ourselves to call the usual exercises of the Sabbath the worship of God. We call these exercises, in fact all the special works the Church enjoins, at best mere preparations for, or aids to the worship of God. "Pure worship," (for so the original should be rendered,) says St. James, "and undefiled before God the Father, is to visit the fatherless and the widows in their afflictions, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." By this we understand the practice of a pure and elevated morality. We worship God when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, show hospitality to the stranger, visit the sick, and minister to the wants of the prisoner. We worship God when we cultivate our moral powers, develop our better nature, acquire just and holy principles, and prepare ourselves for a generous self-sacrifice in the cause of truth and Humanity; when we forget ourselves, go out into the highways and byways, into the world at large, and labor to recall the erring, to enlighten the ignorant, to comfort the sorrowing, to heal the broken-hearted, to raise up the down-trodden, and to set at liberty them that are bound; when, in a word, we seek to redress all individual and social wrongs, and to establish, in our own hearts and in society at large, the

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\* See Boston Quarterly Review, No. II. April, 1838. pp. 216-218.



reign of truth, justice, and love. Here is what we understand by the worship of God. So far as your gathering together on one day in seven, singing psalms and listening to religious discourses, being baptized or partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, contribute to this end, so far we approve what is usually termed the worship of God; but no farther. These exercises are simply means to an end, and so far as our experience goes, not very efficient means. It is the cant of the day to praise them; to speak of them as the dear and venerable institutions of religion, without which we should all degenerate into barbarism and the grossest licentiousness; but we have no respect for this cant; and ninety-nine out of a hundred of those, whose mouths are fullest of it, have just as little. We can tolerate an open, avowed infidel; but not a canting hypocrite, whose mouth is full of the institutions of our ancestors, and the blessed doctrines of the Gospel, — but whose heart is harder than the nether millstone, and whose life is one mass of corruption. We wish to hear things called by their right names; and we can dignify nothing with the name of worship to God, which is not either in itself intrinsically good, or which does not contribute something to the well-being of man, — to the growth of the individual, or the progress of society.

So much, again, for the worship of God, which, with us, is simply being good, and doing good.

We turn now to the priesthood. Here we beg our readers to bear in mind what it is that we understand by the term priest. As the term is used in our article, it has two meanings. First, it means a man who acts as a sort of mediator between man and God. Secondly, it means one of a profession whose duty it is to expound to us, *for hire, and authoritatively*, the great doctrines of religion and morals. In the first sense, the word is rarely used in this country. There are few of our countrymen who regard a priest as capable of mediating between them and God. This, however, is the old sense of the word, and especially the Jewish

sense; but in this sense a priest cannot be admitted under the Gospel. We all unquestionably require a mediator between us and the Father, for no man can approach the Father without a mediator. But we have, as we have before said, one Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all. This one Mediator we hold is enough. Jesus Christ is our grand High Priest, and he alone, if there be any truth in the New Testament, is sufficient. He has offered up the great propitiatory sacrifice, hath entered into the Holy of Holies for us, and forever sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us. If any man sin, he has not now to go to a priest to intercede for him, to pray for him; for Paul says, "I would that men should pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting." He wants no priest to propitiate the Deity for him; for as John says, "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." It is evident, then, that Jesus, as Mediator, supersedes all necessity of priests in the first sense in which we have used the term. In seeking to abolish the priestly order, then, in the sense of a mediator between God and man, we are merely following out the doctrine of the Gospel, — a doctrine our readers will find clearly set forth in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

So much for the first sense in which we use the word priest. Thus far, we presume we shall encounter no very violent opposition. In touching upon the priests in the second sense, in which we have used the term, we touch upon altogether more dangerous ground, and run some risk of being crucified between two thieves. In this second sense we, of course, include the great body of the clergy of all denominations, which recognise a clergy, and therefore raise up against us a numerous and a powerful host of foes. But we are not much afraid of consequences. We are not ignorant of the fact that here "the fist of wick-

edness that would, is bound that it cannot smite ;” and were it not so, we still should feel quite at our ease ; for we have long since learned not to fear them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do ; but Him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to destroy both soul and body in hell.

But on the point, upon which we now touch, we must ask our readers to do their best not to misinterpret us. For the views, we actually set forth, we hold ourselves responsible, and are willing to receive whatever measure of condemnation the community in its justice, or its zeal, may choose to mete out ; but we are not willing to be held responsible for what we do not believe, nor to be condemned for doctrines we should abhor to teach. We wish it therefore distinctly understood, that we do not, in opposing the clergy, oppose teachers of religion, nor preachers of the Gospel. We would have more preaching of the Gospel, not less ; more religious congregations, not fewer. We oppose not clergymen in their capacity of men and Christians, nor in their capacity of simple teachers or ministers of the Gospel ; but in their capacity of members of an ecclesiastical corporation, of a separate profession, authorized by law, fashion, or custom, to tell us authoritatively what we must believe and do in order to be saved, and who are to obtain their rank in society, and their means of living, by ministering at the altar. We believe the time has come when the clerical profession, *as a separate profession*, as a sort of trade, is no longer needed ; nay, when it has become a positive hindrance to the diffusion of knowledge, and the growth of religion in the soul. We war then not against preaching the Gospel, but against making the preaching of the Gospel a trade, a regular business, from which a numerous class of men are to derive their revenues. And to this we have several serious objections.

1. We find no authority in the New Testament for the support of such a profession. Jesus sent out Apostles, and the Holy Ghost calls men to prophesy



and to teach ; but not as we can discover to be clergymen or priests. Under Judaism, there was a regularly constituted priesthood, hereditary in a particular tribe and family, but nothing of this is recognised under the Gospel. The old covenant, which recognised priests as mediators between God and men, was condemned, as insufficient ; and God told us by the mouth of his prophet, that “ the days should come when he would make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah. I will put,” says he, “ my law in their inward parts, and write it upon their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, and they shall not teach every man his brother, and every man his neighbor, saying, Know the Lord ; for all shall know me from the least of them to the greatest.” Now, here is the new covenant under which we are. This new covenant recognises but one Mediator, Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for us. It recognises no priestly order, except the order of Melchisedec ; that is, an order of priests, who are priests not by human appointment, or human ordinances, not by consecration with holy oil, or the laying on of the hands of the presbytery ; but by the inward anointing of the Holy Ghost, by having God’s law within, and written on the heart. After the order of Melchisedec, the new covenant proposes to make all men priests. Under the Gospel, all men are evidently called to be “ kings and priests.” This fact is important. Under the Jewish dispensation, only the descendants of David could be kings, and only the tribe of Levi could furnish priests. In calling all men to be kings and priests, the Gospel took ground directly opposite to the Jewish, and proclaimed, on the one hand, the royal and priestly nature of every man, and on the other, the abolition of all distinctions founded on birth or blood ; in other words, it proclaimed the natural and essential equality of all men. Moreover, in seeking to make every man a king and a priest, the Gospel, of course, seeks to dispense with everything like a separate order of kings or of priests. If all

men should become kings, the effect would be the same with having no king at all; for all would be equal. If all men should become priests, it would be the abolition of the priestly order, as a separate order. In relation to that order, in the sense in which we have condemned it, we should stand precisely as if we had no priests. Now, as the Gospel makes no provision for a clerical order, as it contemplates making every man his own priest, we have a right to infer, that it does not authorize a priesthood in the practical sense in which mankind understand the term.

If there be any truth in the statement, that we are under the new covenant, a covenant which recognises no outward mediator, no outward priesthood, but simply the priesthood of the soul, expressed by putting the law in the inward parts, and writing it on the heart, whereby every man may be his own priest, it follows, that we may oppose the clergy, in the sense in which we do oppose them, without opposing the Gospel; nay, that if we would obey the Gospel, we must oppose them.

It is not difficult to account for the existence of the clerical body. It grew up in a great measure out of the wants of past times; because, in the general ignorance and barbarism of the ages which succeeded the first promulgation of the Gospel, there was a real and useful work for the Christian priest to perform. It also in part, and especially in its priestly character, owes its origin to the old Jewish and pagan notions of a priesthood, which the primitive believers retained even after their conversion to Christ. It has doubtless done much good in its day, when it was needed; but then its day was only till the community became prepared for a truly Christian organization.

2. We object to the clerical profession, because it is impossible for any man faithfully and honestly to fulfil its requirements. Formerly, before the coming of Christ, the office of a priest was comparatively easy. The work the priest was called upon to perform was marked out, and so completely within the

reach of ordinary skill and industry, that any man could do it, with a little preliminary instruction. Religious duties were outward, formal duties, consisting entirely in something to be done, and which could be done mechanically, without thought or emotion. There was no need that the priest should have his mind, or his heart in what he was performing. He was not, as a general rule, a teacher of religion, of moral truth, but a sacrificator. Under Judaism, he was mainly a butcher, whose chief duty it was to slaughter the animals offered in sacrifice. He was, under a religion consisting, as all religions prior to Jesus did consist, mainly in rites and ceremonies, a very necessary and indispensable functionary. But just in proportion as religion becomes spiritualized, is made to consist in inward communion with God, he becomes less and less indispensable. In the Catholic Church, the priest has still somewhat to do, which a man may always be prepared to do. That Church has an imposing *cultus*, a service, deemed essential to the salvation of souls, which cannot be performed without priests. Priests there are necessary to administer the sacraments, of which there are seven. In that Church, we cannot marry without a priest, be born without a priest, be buried without a priest, nor be saved or damned without a priest. Some little show of propriety is there then, in the Catholic Church, in having priests, because there is a considerable work necessary to be done for the worship of God, which the individual cannot do for himself. Also, in the Church of England, the clerical order can get along very well. It has a ritual, a service, which requires the assistance of a clergyman, and which the clergyman may render mechanically. If one only have pleasant manners, a respectable personal appearance, a good voice, and a tolerable capacity as a reader, he can be a very commendable priest in the Church of England, whatever be the qualities of his mind or his heart. But in proportion as we advance on these two Churches, and leave them and their Jewish and pagan traditions behind, the



duties of the clergy become more arduous, and more difficult of performance; because they cannot be performed mechanically, or as a matter of routine.

We go into a Calvinistic Church, whether Baptist or Presbyterian, and we find very little for the clergyman to perform, which he can perform properly without the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. He may, be his heart or his mind where it may, baptize, by aspersion or immersion, and administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper; but this is all. The Calvinistic churches have very properly abolished almost everything like a cultus exterior. They adopt no ritual, no liturgy, and have reduced the sacraments to two. They have spiritualized so much, that they have spirited away nearly all the old work there was for the clergyman to do. In revenge, they have imposed upon him new duties; and duties which infinitely surpass mortal strength. The main duties of the clergyman with us are to make pastoral visits, pray and preach on Sundays, and administer the two sacraments we have specified. The pastoral visits, the praying and the preaching, require, at the moment of their performance, the full action of the mind, and a lively glow of devotional feeling. Nothing is more painful to the really conscientious minister, than to be called upon to pray, either in a private family or in public, when he has no spirit of prayer, when his devotional feelings are cold or languid. But he must go through with the forms of prayer, whatever be the frame of his heart. He must take the sacred words on his lips, and utter them with fervor, although no fervor he feels. This sullies the chastity of his soul, and he soon comes to perform his devotional exercises without having his heart in them. He affects in their performance a warmth he does not feel, and becomes in the end a mere actor, now appearing to weep with the mourners at a funeral, and now half an hour afterwards to make merry with a bridal party at a wedding; while he has the most perfect indifference to both. He in reality makes a mock of devotion. He feels that it is so,

and loathes himself. He would do better, would be sincere, always in earnest; but it is not in his power. He goes into his pulpit to-day with a barren mind, with listless thoughts, cold and languid feelings. He has no life in him. But there is a congregation demanding that he shall lead its devotions, waiting for him to quicken its devout feelings, and lead it into the presence of God. Alas, he himself is by no means in God's presence, and cannot rise to it. How then shall he lead others there? It is a moral injury to compel him in this state of feeling to go through with the forms of devotion. You force him to play the actor, the hypocrite.

Then, again, you require this man to preach to you, to lay open the mysteries of religion to your understandings, to quicken within you a sense of duty, to raise your thoughts and affections to the spiritual and the everlasting. There are moments when he can do this, when his mental vision shall be clear, his heart glowing with Divine love, his mind full of great and kindling thoughts, and his utterance be with power. Then it is profitable to him, and to you, that he should preach. Then the spirit rests upon him, and he can speak to you as it were with a tongue of fire. But how few are these moments in the lives of the best of men! They come not at our bidding. We must wait for them, as waited the poor wretches for the angel to descend and trouble the waters of Bethesda. The young man has felt something of this moving of God's spirit, and entered the ministry, trusting that he should feel it always. But soon he learns that one does not feel it always; and what is worse, the nature of his profession is such, that he must act ever as if he did feel it. He is, therefore, as a preacher, early compelled to assume a state of feeling which he has not, to become an actor, and to seem to the public what he is not to himself. Who can tell the mischief thus occasioned to the moral health of both clergyman and people? This result is unavoidable. No piety, no genius, no talent, no learning, no effort can guard

against it. We say, then, we do a moral wrong to tempt by our institutions young men into a profession, which exposes them necessarily to the evil here depicted, — an evil which nearly the whole body of our clergy see and deplore.

Indeed, who that knows anything of the human mind and its capacities, can avoid smiling at the simplicity, which exacts of a man fifty or a hundred, and in some cases a hundred and fifty sermons in a year, for thirty, forty, or fifty years in succession? And in these times, too, when the general intelligence of the people is increasing so rapidly, that it requires no small effort on the part of the clergyman to keep pace with it? We ask altogether too much. Our clergymen labor hard to meet the demands made upon them, and we see their success in their broken constitutions, and early graves. It were infinitely better for them and for us, would we so arrange matters that no man should be required to lead our devotions, except when he had the spirit of prayer on him, and that no man should be called to address a public assembly, except when he had a word pressing upon his heart for utterance.

3. We also object to the present constitution of the clergy, because, we hold that no man has a right to preach unless called by the Holy Ghost, and only when he is moved by the spirit of God. God's spirit is in the world; it moves in the hearts of men; it calls one here and another there, one to this work and another to that; it anoints one with an unction from above, and fits him for the acceptable performance of the work to which he is called. They who are designated as preachers by God's spirit, who are fitted for their work by the anointing of the Holy Ghost, and who, therefore, can speak with authority, and a word which shall be with power, we hold have a right to preach; but none others. This, we believe is the doctrine of the New Testament.

Now, are we to presume that the great body of the clergy of Christendom have been thus called by the



Holy Ghost? If so, we must believe in very deed, that "God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wisdom of the wise, and weak things to confound them that are mighty." But it is no lack of charity to say, that in a vast majority of cases, the Holy Ghost has no agency in the matter; or if, at one period in the life of the individual clergyman, he had shed down some hallowing influence, he has long since been grieved, and withheld it. The truth is, and there is no use in denying it, that the greater portion of those, who enter the ministry, enter it not because they believe that they have any special vocation thereto, but because it promises them a respectable means of living; or because their parents or friends have insisted upon their entering it. As a general rule with us, a man enters the ministry because he has some taste for literary pursuits and serious studies; because he would have some more influential and reputable calling than that of mere manual labor. The boy is sent to school, from the school to the academy, from the academy to the college; during the last year of his college life, he usually decides what profession he will take. On leaving college, if his decision has been in favor of the law, he enters a lawyer's office; if in favor of medicine, he goes to study with some practitioner; if in favor of divinity, he enters the Theological Seminary. There he pores, or does not pore, over a mass of antiquated volumes, fills his head with a certain quantity of dead men's brains, and is forthwith licensed to the cure of souls. Now what has the spirit of God to do with all this? Follow this licentiate into the pulpit, follow him till he is settled in the ministry, listen to his devotions, listen to his sermons, and what hear you? A man speaking with a living voice, out of his own full heart, and from his own earnest convictions, great and kindling truths, burning from the primal Source of Truth itself? No; you hear a dull, wheezy drone, from which you are fain to take refuge in your own thoughts, or in sleep; or you hear a parrot repeating what some dull pro-

fessor has beaten into him. Blaspheme not, we pray you, the Holy Ghost, by saying that this talking automaton is of his calling.

4. We object to the clergy, because they receive at present no encouragement to preach the word of God faithfully, and are so situated that it is their interest to conceal that word, whenever it is not in accordance with the convictions and the usages of the community, or of their particular congregations.

We are not among those who rail at the clergy. We have had some acquaintance with them, and some of our best and most valued friends are clergymen. We are far from believing that in moral or intellectual worth the clergy fall much below any other class of the community. We believe no class has ever furnished brighter or more numerous examples of a disinterested devotion to truth and duty. Individuals from their body have always been foremost in all great reforms, whether moral, social, or political. They, who stand at the head of the movement party in this country, have been bred to the church, and have officiated as clergymen. These are facts which it gives us pleasure to state. Still, the clergy, as a body, can in general be free, and bold, only by compromising their support; and it needs no extensive knowledge of human nature to know that, where this is the case, the prevailing spirit of the body will be that of compliance, not that of independence.

There are and can be but three methods of supporting a clergy, as a professional body. The first, that of a church establishment, by independent ecclesiastical revenues; the second, that of a salary, paid directly or indirectly by the civil government; and the third, what is called the voluntary system.] The first system is the Catholic system, and is that which prevailed from the downfall of the Roman Empire up to the rise of Protestantism in the sixteenth century, and which still obtains, we believe, in most Catholic countries. This system has the advantage over the two others of rendering the clergy independent of both

the government and the people. The priest can reprove, without fear of losing his salary, both his congregation and the state. So far his situation is desirable. Neither can call him to an account for his doctrines, or punish him for heresy. This gives him, so far as they are concerned, all the independence needed, and a moral power which has often proved salutary. If we must always have a regular clergy, a class of men whose profession it is to minister at the altar, and who are to obtain their means of living by their profession, we should prefer this system to all others. We would raise the clergy above the people, and above the state, and give them an income for which they should be dependent on neither. But we are by no means satisfied with this system. If it render the clergy independent of the state and the congregation, it in return enslaves the congregation and the state to the priesthood; and, what is almost as bad, the individual priest to the whole body of priests. The individual priest must obey the commands of his order, comply with the creed and usages of the church, or be ejected from his living, and punished for innovation and heresy. The priesthood may thus be independent, but the individual priest is a slave. He is as much enslaved as he can be under either of the other two systems, though not to the same master.

The second system obtains in France, in Protestant Germany, and perhaps in England. We say *perhaps* in England. In England nothing is systematic. Everything is jumbled together, till we have a heterogeneous mass, of which it is rarely safe to affirm or deny anything without numerous qualifications and reserves. The king there is head of the church, and the creed and constitution of the church are subject to the revision and determination of parliament. This of course subjects the church to the state. But it professes to hold its revenues by certain vested rights, which transcend the legitimate reach of the civil government. It is properly therefore a combination of an independent church, like the Catholic, sustaining itself



by its own revenues, and of a church supported by the state as one of its functionaries, as is the case in Protestant Germany. But be this as it may, nothing outrages our ideas of propriety more than the subjection of the church to the state; in which case the clergy must sustain the civil order which may at any time exist, or be ejected as non-jurors. If the church be anything, it is the embodiment of moral ideas. It is then by its very nature superior to the state, which embodies only material ideas. It should then, as the Roman Catholic has always contended, give the law to the state, and not receive it from the State. The priest is, if he is anything, the superior of the magistrate. To subject the church to the control of the state, strikes us then as analogous to subjecting the soul to the control of the body, mind to the control of matter.

But both of these systems presuppose an establishment, either ecclesiastical or civil, on which the clergy as individuals depend for their living. The interest then of the clergy will always be to sustain that establishment. Consequently, the great body of the clergy must always be conservatives, and opposed to innovations, changes, progress. Neither system can be adopted by any one who believes that the world may be ameliorated, or a better order introduced. The first system can obtain only with those who believe in the infallibility of the church; the second only with those who believe in the infallibility of the state; but as we believe neither in the infallibility of the one nor of the other, we reject both systems of supporting the clergy. Any method of sustaining the clergy, which gives them a direct interest in upholding either the church or the state as it is, we hold to be adverse to the true interests of mankind. When you have a church that embodies the full idea of Jesus, we will consent to desist from attacking it, and from seeking in relation to it, any further progress. But so long as it confessedly falls far below that idea, we must needs believe that its ministers should be so situated,

that they may be free to labor to perfect it. When you will introduce a perfect civil order, we will consent that you shall organize the clergy in such a way, that they shall have a direct interest in sustaining it; but so long as the civil organization of mankind remains in its present imperfection, it is madness to bring all the moral force of the great body of the clergy to bear, as it must if they are sustained by the state, against all who would labor to perfect it.

It remains now to consider what is called the voluntary system. This system we deem decidedly, as a permanent system, the worst of the three. The first system implies the infallibility of the church, and enslaves the state and the people to the ecclesiastical order, besides enslaving each individual clergyman to the whole body of clergymen taken collectively; the second enslaves the individual clergyman and the people in like manner as the first, but subjects the church to the state; the third destroys all independency in the clergy both collectively and individually, and makes them martyrs, or time-servers.

This system is the predominant one in this country. It is, however, not adopted by all our religious sects. The Methodists have adopted the Catholic system. They depend neither on the state nor on their congregations for the support of their ministers. The church invests and supports its own clergy out of its own revenues; and whenever it becomes wealthy, it will be able to enslave both the people and the state. The Methodists are the only sect in this country from which much danger to our free institutions need be apprehended. Their increase in numbers, wealth, and respectability, is rapid. They are now, we believe, the most numerous sect in the Union; and some of their ministers have boasted that they could control the policy of the government any day they should please. This boast is idle now; but let them increase for fifty years to come, as they have for fifty years past, and it will not be an idle boast then. We honor the evangelical zeal of the Methodist minister; we honor his

indefatigable and self-sacrificing spirit ; we honor his single-hearted piety, and unaffected humility ; but we see in the organization of his Church the very elements on which was originally based the Catholic Church, and which wait only time and opportunity to reproduce that Church in all its most revolting features.

The Presbyterian Church also modifies the voluntary system somewhat, by adopting the Catholic system to a certain extent. It is an organized body, constituting throughout the Union a grand church establishment ; not recognised by law indeed, but acting on its members with all the force of a civil government. It is controlled by the clergy as an organized body, slightly reinforced by an infusion of lay delegates. The individual church, indeed, pays its clergyman by voluntary contribution ; but it has only a partial voice in selecting its pastor, and can get rid of him only by the consent of the presbytery, or by forfeiting its relation to the Presbyterian Church. Moreover, its pastor cannot enter upon the discharge of his clerical functions, till consecrated by the presbytery ; and the presbytery will not consecrate him to the pastoral charge of a church, till it makes provisions for what in their judgment is a competent salary. Hence, the Presbyterian clergyman is not entirely dependent on the people of his charge. If they dislike him they cannot at once rid themselves of him, unless they would cease to belong to the Church, out of which, they believe there is no salvation, or at least, no salvation easily to be come at. It is this independency of the clergy on the churches, and the strict organization of the clergy into an ecclesiastical body, and in relation to the churches, and to the clergy themselves as individuals, a ruling body, possessed of legislative, judiciary, and executive powers, that have made many of the friends of religion and liberty look on the Presbyterian Church with unpleasant forebodings. We, however, fear it less than we do the Methodist Episcopal Church ; because in its organization and support, the popular voice has some slight



chance of admission. The only Church in this country, unless it be the Baptist,— which in this respect we believe is nearly the same,— that adopts the voluntary system in its purity, is the Congregational. In this Church, each clergyman is dependent entirely on the congregation over which he is settled. The congregation is independent of every other congregation, and is capable in itself of managing its own affairs. It can elect, consecrate, and dismiss its own minister; and its minister, except by courtesy, or a departure from the true Congregational theory, is responsible for his ministerial conduct solely to his congregation, or church. He has no authority in the church, except that which he may derive from appeals to its reason, conscience, or prejudice. The Baptist Church, we believe, departs from this theory, so far as to organize its clergy into a sort of ecclesiastical body, with the right of discipline over its members.\* So also does the sect called Christians, together with the Universalists. These last superadd to the voluntary system, therefore, a portion of the Catholic system, to which, by the by, there will always be, in a religious community where the voluntary system predominates, a strong tendency. Now, under this purely voluntary system, as under both of the others, or under a combination of the three, the individual clergyman is enslaved. Under the Catholic system, if he do not preach to suit the body of which he is a member, he will be deposed, and most likely excommunicated, as we have lately seen in the case of the Abbé de la Mennais. Under the second, if he do not preach to suit the State, he will have his salary withheld, and be himself ejected from his charge, and forbidden to preach; under the third, if he do not preach to suit the congregation, or rather some three or four of its most prominent and aristocratic members, he will be dismissed, and sent out into the world most likely

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\* The Baptist Churches, as an association, we believe, have the right of discipline over individual churches.

penniless, with a stain on his reputation, and a wife and children dependent on him for that support, which he knows not, sees not, where in the world to procure. How strong then is the temptation of the preacher to conform to the wishes or the prejudices of the more influential members of his congregation.

Now, if we look at our parishes throughout the greater part of New England, we shall find that very few of them would be able to support a clergyman, if some three or four of the more wealthy members should withhold their subscriptions or their pew tax. These three or four individuals,—and they are always conservatives,—thus dictate in most cases the course of the minister, virtually write his sermons, and determine the doctrines he shall preach, the moral and social objects he shall labor to support. If they are distillers, he must not speak of the sin of manufacturing and vending ardent spirits; if they are factory owners, the iniquities of the present factory system he must not point out; if they are merchants, he must not censure the unchristian spirit of trade which the mercantile world fosters; if slaveholders, he must labor to prove that slavery is sanctioned by all laws human and divine; if stockholders in some rail-road corporation, he must laud the moral influence of rail-roads; if bankers, he must beware how he questions in public or in private the utility of paper money. This is no fancy sketch. Every clergyman knows, or may know, the truth of what we say. We have ourselves been in the ministry, and have had some opportunity of making observations. ✓

We may lay it down as a general rule, that clergymen are solely dependent on their salaries for their means of living. There are undoubtedly some exceptions, but the exceptions are too few to deserve notice in our argument. It may also be assumed, that very few are capable of deriving a support from any other profession. They have fitted themselves to be clergymen; they have bent all their energies towards their profession, and are in general destitute of the

knowledge and the habits, that would ensure their success in any other pursuits, at least a success that would sustain them in that rank in life which they occupy as clergymen. Moreover, the salaries which in this country are paid, with a few exceptions, are so meagre, that no clergyman can, without a miserly economy which his parishioners will not tolerate, lay up anything against the reverses which may come. In a large majority of cases, the salary is probably consumed at least a quarter in advance. As a general rule, then, the clergyman is dependent on his congregation for his means of living. These means come only on the condition, that his preaching pleases them; and it will please them only on the condition, that it is conformed to their faith, their tastes, their wishes, their habits, and their interests. Consequently the clergyman has the strongest inducements, unless he be of a martyr-like spirit, which we have no reason to expect in the case of but a few, to conform to the views and wishes of his congregation. His main study, at least so far as concerns his public communications, will be, on all great points, on all matters of real significance, not what is true, but what will suit his people. He will cultivate, on the one hand, a spirit of compliance, and study to shape his doctrines and exhortations to the prejudices of the people; and on the other hand he will cultivate the talents and manners of a demagogue. He must do this, or fail to retain his place, if he be a man of any force of character at all. There is not a congregation in Christendom, that will pay a man a salary for preaching what it does not believe, for laboring to establish an order of things in either church or state, which it regards as unsound. There is, then, only this alternative before the clergyman; either to preach to suit his people, or to be sullied in reputation, and sent supperless to bed. Need we doubt which alternative the majority will take?

It may be said, that we represent the clergyman as affected by low and unworthy motives. Perhaps so;



but we believe most men are disposed to turn an eye to their bread and butter, and few have the courage to look hunger in the face and bid it welcome to them, and especially to a wife and little ones they tenderly love. It is easy for a Lucullus or a Seneca to praise poverty; but we are not ashamed to own that we have uniformly found poverty a very disagreeable companion, and one which by no means improves by familiarity. We are not among those who sing the praises of poverty. Few poor men are.

Now, these and many other considerations, which we have not room to specify at present, have induced us to believe that the purposes of the Christian ministry cannot be accomplished, without a radical change in the constitution of the clergy. We would abolish all salaried preaching, not because we have any objections to paying for intellectual labor, but because we would hold out no inducement to a man to preach as a means of gaining a livelihood, and because we would have no man hindered in the utterance of his honest convictions, by thinking of the effect such utterance may have on his supply of the necessities of life. If a man comes forward merely to utter his word, without asking you to pay him for uttering it, without expecting any pecuniary reward for uttering it, he will speak with some sort of independence and effect. Suppose you do not believe him, suppose you are angry and close your church doors against him; you cannot starve him into its suppression. He has the means of living from another source, and like St. Paul, can "reason and dispute in his own hired house," and say to you, "these hands have supported me, and can support me again." The Gospel was not promulgated, and the church built up in the face of a hostile world, by a salaried clergy; but by humble fishermen and tent-makers, carpenters and carpenters' sons,—men who went forth with their staff in their hand, and the love of God in their hearts, and spoke not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The regular clergy, the

hired defenders of religion, and the servants of her altars, were foremost among their enemies and persecutors; as they will always be foremost among the persecutors of the true ministers of the Gospel, men imbued with the true apostolic spirit, and determined to overthrow the kingdom of Satan, and build up that of God's dear Son.

One word in reference to our views of the manner in which a Christian ministry should be constituted, and we close this part of our subject. The Society of Friends, or Quakers, makes the nearest approach to our views, on this point, of any sect with which we are acquainted. If you will carry out, in systematic consistency, to its logical results, the idea with which George Fox and William Penn originally started, you will have the constitution of both the church and the clergy, which we are desirous of introducing. The Quakers reject the common notions of the church; they in fact recognise no church but the invisible, spiritual Church, founded by the Holy Spirit, and built up in the soul. They recognise only a single outward organization of mankind, and consequently condemn both church and state as they now are. They would organize mankind; that is, they would have a social organization of the race; but that organization must be based on the principles of the Christian religion, and the teachings of the Spirit. This is what we want.

For the purposes of spiritual edification and progress, the Quaker idea subdivides the community at large into small communities, called religious meetings. These little communities, or rather families, erect each a convenient meeting-house, where they assemble, as often as may be thought advisable, and spend some two hours in silent meditation, or in listening to religious discourses. We would do the same in every district, or parish, if you please, of convenient size. We would have erected a plain, substantial meeting-house, which should be the property of the parish. Thither we would all repair, say twice a week, for

religious edification. When assembled, we would sit in silent meditation, unless some one was moved by the Spirit of God to speak. This silent meditation, this being still and communing with the Spirit of God, is altogether more profitable to the soul, than is commonly imagined. The most imposing spectacle, we ever witnessed, was a whole congregation, sitting in profound silence, dead as it were to the world and its cares, and lost in sweet and mystic communion with the Father of Spirits. This silence is to us the sublimest, and we have often found it the most inspiring, eloquence. We are too much in a hurry; we are too noisy, too clamorous; and we know not how to be still, and see the wonderful works of Providence. The lesson, we most need to learn, is that of being still, of silent meditation.

If, when we have come together, there be one in our midst who has a word pressing for utterance, whoever he be, he shall be at liberty to utter it. The only restrictions, we would tolerate, are merely those which may be necessary for the preservation of order. These restrictions, the meeting should be competent to impose, as a standing rule, or by-law, subject to such alterations as experience may find to be necessary. The Quakers, we believe, have no difficulty in preserving order in their meetings. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is always order as well as freedom.

In some such way as is here indicated, it strikes us, that we may secure all the advantages of a preached Gospel, without any of the evils we have specified, — without the necessity of resorting to a clerical body, or an organized priesthood. What we want is free thought and free speech, together with deliverance from a class whose interest it is, as a class, to uphold things as they are, and to do their best to roll back the ever advancing waves of truth. We want men free to think, and free to speak what they think, free to utter the truth which comes to them, and in the very tones in which it comes to them, — men who will rebuke the sin they abhor, and be earnest in their demands



for the reforms which they see needed. Secure us the end here implied, and you may organize the clergy as you please ; we shall neither oppose you nor them.

IV. Our account of the condition of the laboring classes, we have been told, is exaggerated and false. This objection would have some weight with us, were it not urged exclusively by those who live by availing themselves of the labors of the workingmen, and who, therefore, have a direct interest in keeping them as they are.

We are not ignorant that there is a class of our fellow citizens, who stare at us as if we were out of our wits, or possessed of no ordinary malignancy, when we represent the workingman as still a slave, and demand his enfranchisement. In their estimation he is already enfranchised, already a free man, in the full significance of the term ; and no more dependent on the capitalist, than the capitalist is on him. These people, who think so, are, we must admit, very decent people in their way, and we desire to have for them all becoming respect. On several subjects they unquestionably have considerable intelligence and sound views. Did we wish to ascertain the rates of exchange on England or France, the prices of stocks, broadcloths, cottons, or tape, and such like matters, there are no people in the world we would more willingly consult, or with greater deference. But in questions like those which now concern us, — questions which relate to the bearing of social or economical systems, the actual progress of civilization, or the means of advancing it, we must be held excusable, if we cannot in all respects take them for our masters. If the cobbler may lend Phidias some useful hints in adjusting a slipper to the foot of his statue, he can rarely do it in moulding the head and features of Jupiter or Apollo.

✓ For ourselves, we were born and reared in the class of proletaries ; and we have merely given utterance to their views and feelings. We have said little con-

cerning their condition not warranted by what we have ourselves either seen or felt. We have made no random statement, and drawn no hasty inference. We know whereof we affirm; and shall abide by what we have already affirmed; at least, until the laboring classes themselves rise up and accuse us of misrepresenting them.

We have read, with as much attention and patience as could be reasonably expected of us, the various arguments offered by our conservative friends to prove the desirableness of the laboring man's condition. Some of these arguments seem almost specious at first sight; but we had examined them all long before we published our article on the laboring classes, and, without claiming any credit for extraordinary abilities, we believe we could have furnished those, who urge them, arguments much more to their purpose. Our good friends would do well to brush up their ideas, purge their vision, and look a little deeper into the subject. It may be we have studied it somewhat longer and on more sides than they have; and they must not think that arguments, which would do no special honor to a clever lad of a dozen years of age, are precisely the thing with which we are to be overwhelmed. They merely amuse us with their simplicity, or grieve us with their ignorance. We are sorry to say that, thus far, they have shown by no means that acquaintance with the subject generally, which their pretensions to wisdom, and the pains, which have unquestionably been taken with their moral and intellectual culture, should have led one beforehand to expect.

This, however, may be easily accounted for. The class of persons, who have been loudest in their condemnation of us, are the *Nouveaux riches*, *parvenus*, upstarts, men who have themselves come up from the class of proletaries, and who have made it a virtue to forget "the rock whence they were hewn." Standing now on the shoulders of their brethren, they are too elevated to see what is going on at the base of the social organization. Would you know what is going on down

there, you must interrogate those who dwell there, and feel the pressure that is on them. One would not interrogate the rider in order to ascertain the sensations the horse has in being ridden.

Then, again, these persons never had any sympathy with the class of proletaries. They early adopted that convenient morality, pithily expressed in the maxim, "Look out for Number One;" and consequently have never studied their condition, except so far as they could avail themselves of it as a means of their own elevation. They have found the condition of the workingmen a very convenient help to those, who are skilful enough to avail themselves of it as a means of rising to the top of the social ladder; and therefore they have inferred that it is good enough for those who are always to remain in it. Would these upstarts be willing to exchange places with the workingmen? If so, let us see them do it; if not, let them be silent.

Moreover, these people have risen in the social scale to be, what one of their number calls, "the better sort," and they very naturally are anxious to have us understand that it has been by the blessing of God and their own virtue. [They wish us to believe that they are what they are, because they are wiser, more talented, more skilful, and more virtuous than those they have left behind them.] They wish to be able to say, "God, I thank thee, that I am better than these poor wretches, who toil on from one year's end to another, and yet accumulate nothing." This is no doubt a very pleasant manner of addressing the Deity; it puts one in admirable humor with oneself, and saves one from any compunctious twinges of conscience, one might have on hearing the cry of the poor and needy. Now, if you say the proletaries are in a hopeless condition, if you say they cannot of themselves rise from their condition, you take away a considerable portion of these people's personal merit, and lower their fancied superiority several degrees. It therefore behooves them to maintain that the condition of the proletaries



is good enough. If the proletaries are poor and wretched, the fault is all their own. It is owing to their incapacity, their indolence, or their vice. Were we not once poor, and are we not now rich and respectable?

We suppose by this we are to understand, that all may become rich and respectable, if they would. Now, do the persons of whom we speak desire us to understand them as claiming all the capacity, all the virtue, and all the respectability of the race? Pray, what evidence do they give of their exclusive claims in this respect? Has no very indifferent mechanic grown rich by availing himself of the superior skill and workmanship of his journeyman? Is the mere fact of their success in the accumulation of wealth a proof of their superior merit? Some crabbed old author, we once read, says, "God usually gives the greatest wealth to the greatest fools, that he may show thereby to the world its utter worthlessness;" and we have sometimes suspected that the old author had not spent all his life in his closet.

"But *we* have risen and so may others." Yes, doubtless; *some* others; but *all* others? How have you risen? By the productive industry of your own hands? By hard work. Aye, but by what kind of hard work? Has it not been by hard work in studying how you could turn the labors of others to your own profit; that is, transfer the proceeds of labor from the pockets of the laborer to your own? If you had had no laboring class, dependent entirely on its labor for the means of living, whose industry you could lay under contribution, would you ever have risen to your present wealth? Of course not. Of course, then, only a certain number of individuals of the laboring classes could, even with your talents, skill, and matchless virtues, rise as you have done. One rises from the class of proletaries only by making those, he leaves behind, the lever of his elevation. This, therefore, necessarily implies that there must always be a laboring class, and of course that the

means, which this or that laborer uses for his individual elevation, cannot in the nature of things be used by all of his class.

But our conservative friends shift their ground, when driven to this point, and take refuge in Providence; or rather seek to make Providence the scape-goat for their social sins. They allege that Providence has ordained all these distinctions, has made some to be rich and others to be poor. It is all God's doing. That vain pretender to piety, who grows rich out of the labors of those half-starved sempstresses, and who tells the poor girl when she asks for more wages, "My dear, I give you all I can afford; I have to pay so much now for what I have done, that I can hardly live by my business, and I would throw it up, were it not a Christian duty to give employment to those who otherwise might starve or do worse,—this base hypocrite, who, as the Abbé de La Mennais says, "has no name out of hell," grows rich by Divine Appointment, does he? And you accuse us of infidelity, for uttering the natural indignation of a virtuous soul at such foul blasphemy? We have looked now and then into the upper classes of society, if not often, at least often enough to see their hollow-heartedness and loathsome depravity; and we assure them, that not to us will it answer to preach, that they are the distinguished favorites of Heaven. The miserable vagrant, who has no lodging but the bare earth, and whom your police punishes for sleeping on the only bed he can procure, often surpasses, in a true, manly virtue, many a loud-boasting and loud-boasted pharisee, whose praises may be read in the public journals, and heard from the pulpit. No; "Go to, now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped up treasure for the last days, (or the last time.) Behold the hire of the laborers, who have

reaped down your fields, which of you is kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them that have reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabbaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.”\*

So does an inspired Apostle address you, ye rich men; and Jesus himself tells you, that it is “easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven” and that “if ye would be perfect, ye must sell what ye have and give it to the poor, and follow him.” Have ye the effrontery then to tell a man who has the New Testament before him, and who can read it, that ye are rich by the express appointment of God, as a reward for your superior capacities and virtues? Say rather through God’s forbearance and long suffering, waiting to be gracious to the sinner that repents and turns from his evil ways. A terrible book for you, ye scribes and pharisees, ye rich and great of this world, is this same New Testament! “Woe unto you,” it says, “for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but within are full of dead men’s bones, and all uncleanness; because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses that ye are the children of them that killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell!” A terrible book, this New Testament! And did ye but believe it, there would be to you nothing but a fearful looking for of wrath and fiery indignation to devour you as the adversaries of God and his children.

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\* James, v. 1-8, — a good lesson for the rich.



Be sure now, and call him who reads this terrible book in your hearing an infidel, as the thief, when the hue and cry is up, is loudest in calling out "stop thief," that he may turn the pursuit from himself.

✓ "But what would you that we should do? Do we not pay the market price for labor?" Ay, the market price; but who fixes the market price; you, or the laborer? Why do you employ him? Is it not that you may grow rich? Why does he seek employment? Is it not that he may not die of hunger, he, his wife, and little ones? Which is the more urgent necessity, that of growing rich, or that of guarding against hunger? You can live, though you do not employ the laborer; but, if he find not employment, he must die. He is then at your mercy. You have over him the power of life and death. It is then of his necessity that you avail yourselves, and by taking advantage of that you reduce the price of labor to the minimum of human subsistence,\* and then grow rich by purchasing it. ✓ Would you be willing to labor through life as he does, and live on the income he receives? Not at all. You would regard, as the greatest of calamities which could befall you, that of losing your property, and being reduced to the necessity of supporting yourselves and families on the wages you could receive as common laborers. Do you not then see that you condemn in the most positive terms the condition of the proletariat, that you declare plainer than any words we can use, that you look upon that condition as a serious calamity? What right have you then to maintain that a condition, which you regard with horror so far as concerns yourselves, is good enough for your brethren? And why complain of us for calling upon you to do all in your power, so to arrange matters, that no one shall be doomed to that condition? Why do you not, as the Christian law, of doing unto others as you would be done by,

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\* The only drawback on this statement is the competition among capitalists themselves.

commands you, set yourselves at work in earnest to remodel the institution of property, so that all shall be proprietors, and you be relieved from paying wages, and the proletariat from the necessity of receiving them? This is what we would have you do; what we hold you bound to do, and which you must do, or the wrongs and sufferings of the laborer will lie at your door, and his cries will ascend to the ears of an avenging God against you, — a God who espouses the cause of the poor and needy, and has sworn to avenge them on their oppressors. This you know, if you believe at all in that Gospel, which you so wrongfully accuse us of denying.

It is said that we have preferred the slave system to that of free labor, and in so doing have slandered the laboring classes. We understand this objection. It is a device of the Devil. No doubt, they who thrive on the labors of their brethren, would fain make the laboring classes feel that we have wronged them, and have shown contempt for them. But this device will not succeed. It is not contempt for the workingman we have shown, but sympathy with his wrongs; and if we have pointed out the evils of his condition, it has not been to exult over him, but to rebuke the upper classes for their injustice. It has been to show the hollowness of that friendship which these classes profess for him.

We have never pretended that the proletariat is no advance on the slave; he is in advance of the slave; for his rights as a man are legally recognised, though not in fact enjoyed; for he is nearer the day of his complete enfranchisement, and has a greater moral force and more instruments with which to effect it. It is only on the supposition that one or the other is to be a permanent system, that we have given the preference to the slave system over that of labor at wages. We however oppose with all our might both systems. We would have neither the slave nor the proletariat. We would combine labor and capital in the same individual. What we object to, is

the division of society into two classes, of which one class owns the capital, and the other performs the labor. If, however, this division must always take place, we prefer the slave system which prevails at the South, to the free labor system which prevails here at the North. And we are not alone in this opinion. We have conversed with many intelligent mechanics of this city, who have resided at the South, and they all with one voice sustain the view we have here given. They all tell us that, if the present condition of the laborer here must remain forever, they should regard it as worse than that of the Southern slave.

Why is it, we would ask, that so few of the real workingmen here are abolitionists? Why do they interest themselves so little in the freedom of the negro slave? [It is because they feel that they themselves are virtually slaves, while mocked with the name of freemen, and that the movements in behalf of freedom should be first directed towards their emancipation. With them we find friends and supporters in the course we take, and we become endeared to them, just in proportion as the upper classes condemn us; for they feel the truth of what we say.]

We know that the law declares these workingmen equal to any other members of society and the body-politic; but what avails the declaration of the law, when those, in whose favor it is, cannot take advantage of it? What avails the theoretic recognition of their rights, when they want the power to make them recognised in fact? Nor, in truth, is the law so impartial as it would seem. The laws of this Commonwealth, as interpreted by the courts, allow, we believe, the employer to inflict corporal punishment on the employed. In the State of New York, laborers have been fined and imprisoned for refusing to work at the wages offered them; or rather, for agreeing together, not to sell their labor unless at higher price than they had hitherto been paid. Yet manufacturers, flour dealers, physicians, and lawyers, may band together on the



same principle, for a similar end, form their Trades Unions, and no law is violated. A rich man may get drunk in a gentlemanly way, in his own house, and be carried by his servants to his bed, and the law is silent, while the poor man, who has taken a glass too much, and is seen intoxicated, shall be fined, or imprisoned, or both. A man who belongs to the upper classes, may be an habitual drunkard, and the law shall not interfere; but if a poor man is convicted of habitual drunkenness, he shall be sent to the House of Correction. A poor man accused of a crime is convicted in advance,—for he is poor,—and is pretty sure to be punished. A rich man accused, and convicted even, is pretty sure to get clear of the punishment.

Our penal code bears with peculiar severity on the poor. In numerous cases, the punishment is fine or imprisonment. Now, in all these cases, the poor alone are really punished. The rich man, if guilty, can easily pay the fine, without feeling it. The poor can rarely pay the fine; and if they do, it is generally by surrendering all they have, and by drawing some months in advance on their labor; in which case, the punishment of a fine of twenty dollars falls as heavy on the poor man as a fine of as many hundreds would on a rich man. But generally the poor man cannot pay his fine, and consequently must be imprisoned three or six months for an offence, from which a rich man may get clear by paying five, ten, or twenty dollars out of his superfluity. This too in a land of equal laws!

Then, again, the administration of justice is so expensive, that the poor man is rarely able to resort to it. It costs too much. Is he injured in his person? He must give security for the expenses of the court, before he can have even the process for his redress commence. Are his wages withheld? It will cost him more to compel their payment, even if successful, which he can rarely count on being, than they amount

to. He must pocket the insults offered him, and abandon his righteous claims, when not freely allowed.\*

Is a poor man suspected of some crime, although innocent, and it shall turn out that he is innocent, he is forthwith arrested and shut up in gaol, where he must wait two, three, four, six months, or longer, for a trial. It is not long since a poor sailor died in the Hospital where we are now writing, who had been kept in close confinement for nine months or more, on a charge of mutiny, which charge the court declared unfounded. The poor fellow's time was lost, a robust constitution was broken down, and he merely passed from the prison to the Hospital to die. But had he lived, what remuneration would he have received from society for the wrong done him? But a rich man, when arrested, can in most cases find bail, and be at liberty, and about his business, till the trial comes on. But who will bail the poor man? The poor man's time, too, is valuable to him. His labors are necessary to the support of his family. But this is nothing. "He is cast into prison without any care for his infirm old mother, for his wife, or his children. There, in that prison, in the midst of what a corrupt society has of the most unclean and perverse, he counts painfully the days which separate him from his

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\* A calculation was made in the State of New York a few years since, by which it was shown that the expenses attending the legal collection of debts, — taking the state at large, — amounted to more than the debts collected. In making this estimate, the loss of time, interruption of business to both parties, and to witnesses, must be taken into the account, as well as the mere legal costs of suits.

We will add one item here, not added in the text, to prove the slavery of the proletaries. The great mass of these are more or less in debt to the capitalists, or employer class. This tells the whole story. The man who is in debt is a slave, and can no longer meet his creditor on terms of equality. He must submit to all the insults offered him. The feeling on this subject is expressed by a not unfrequent remark, made by a poor man, when insulted by some purse-proud neighbor. "I will pay him what I owe him, and then I'll give him a piece of my mind." Then, imprisonment for debt is by no means abolished in any state in the Union. There is not a poor debtor in this Commonwealth, whom his creditor cannot send to gaol to-morrow, and lock him up too with felons.

family. He represents to himself their tears, their sufferings, their anguish; he hears during the night, in the fever of his half-sleep, each one of them cry, "I am hungry!"\* But what is all this to those, who are revelling at their ease in their palaces at home, or gaining wealth and honors by administering the laws?

But we can pursue this subject no further at present. What we have said, may suffice to show that we could, were we disposed, say somewhat in defence of the account we gave of the condition of the laboring classes. But we forbear. And for our forbearance, our conservative brethren are our debtors. Were we desirous of stirring up the wrath of the laboring classes, as they say we are, they would find us speaking in somewhat other tones, and making an appeal, which would be responded to from every section of our country, in no soft, lulling strains, but with one loud burst of indignation, which should ring, as a summons to the last judgment, on the heart of every man who would lord it over his brother. But we delight not in such appeals; our ears have no pleasure in such responses. We would, if we could, unloose no angry passion. We see society as it is. We see whence it has become what it is. It is the growth of ages. No one man, and no class of men now living are wholly responsible for its vices. All classes are victims of systems and organizations, which have come down to us from the past. We know not in reality, who suffer the most by the present order of things. If we deplore the condition of the laborer, we by no means envy that of the capitalist. We know not, indeed, which most to pity. All are sufferers. The cry of distress comes to us from all classes of society. All are in a false position; all are out of their true condition, as free, high-minded, virtuous men. And instead of weeping, or criminating, we would call upon all, whether high or low, rich or poor,

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\* Abbé de la Mennais. *D'Esclavage moderne.*



to look at things as they are, and set themselves at work in earnest, and in good faith, to ascertain the remedy needed, and to apply it.

V. The great evil of all modern society, in relation to the material order, is the separation of the capitalist from the laborer, — the division of the community into two classes, one of which owns the funds, and the other of which performs the labor, of production.

This division obtains throughout the civilized world, but is less clearly marked with us, than anywhere else. To a considerable extent, our agricultural population combines the proprietor and laborer in the same individual; and where this is not the case, the condition of the proletaries, or hired men, as we call them, presents its most favorable aspect, — at least so far as the non-slaveholding states are concerned. The hired men in the agricultural districts are hardly distinguished from their employers. They are as well dressed, as well educated, work no harder, and mingle with them very nearly on terms of equality in the general intercourse of society.

But this is not universally true, and is becoming less and less so every year. It is said that our agricultural population is rising in wealth, intelligence, and refinement, and this is unquestionably true of landed proprietors. The proportion of what we term gentlemen farmers is, no doubt, rapidly increasing. But this, while it speaks well for the proprietor, tells a mournful tale for the proletary. Where the man who owns the plough holds it, there can be no great disparity between the employer and employed; but this disparity necessarily increases just in proportion as the owner of the plough employs another to hold it. The distance between the owner of the farm, and the men who cultivate it, is, therefore, becoming every day greater and greater.

But it is in our cities, large towns, and manufacturing villages, that the condition of the laboring population is the most unfavorable. The distinction be-

tween the capitalist and the proletary, in these, is as strongly marked as it is in the old world. The distance between the wife and daughters of an Abbot Lawrence, and the poor factory girl employed in his mills, is as great as that between the wife and daughters of an English nobleman, and the daughter of one of his tenants, and the intercourse less frequent. Inter-marriage between the families of the wealthy factory owners, and those of the operatives, is as much an outrage on the public sense of propriety, as it was in ancient Rome between the patricians and plebeians, —almost as much as it would be at the south between the family of a planter and that of one of his slaves.

Still, taking our country throughout, the condition of the proletary population has been, and is altogether superior here to what it is in any other part of the civilized world. We do not, however, attribute this fact to our democratic institutions, nor to the adoption of more enlightened systems of social, political, or domestic economy, than are adopted elsewhere. It is owing to causes purely accidental, and which are rapidly disappearing. The first of these accidental causes may be traced to the original equality of the first settlers of this country. But this equality no longer exists. Fortunes are said to be more unequal with us than they are in France. The second cause, and the main one, has consisted in the low price of land. The ease with which individuals have been able to procure them farms, and pass from the class of proletaries to that of proprietors, has had a constant tendency to diminish the number of proletaries, and to raise the price of labor. But this cause becomes less and less powerful. Few, comparatively speaking, of the proletaries, in any of the old states, can ever become land-owners. Land there, is already too high for that. The new lands are rapidly receding to the west, and can even now be reached only by the those who have some little capital in advance. Moreover, these new lands are not inexhaustible. Fifty years to come, if emigration go on at the rate it has for fifty

years past, will leave very little for the new emigrant.

The causes removed, which have hitherto favored the working-man, and lessened the distance between him and the proprietor, what is to prevent the reproduction here, in our land of boasted equality, of the order of things which now exists in the old world? As yet, that order does not exist here in all its revolting details; but who can fail to see that there is a strong tendency to it? Our economical systems are virtually those of England; our passions, our views, and feelings are similar; and what is to prevent the reproduction of the same state of things in relation to our laboring population with that which gangrenes English society? We confess, we cannot see any causes at work among us likely to prevent it.

The remedies relied on by the political reformers are free trade, and universal suffrage; by the moral reformers, universal education, and religious culture. We agree with both, and sustain them as far as they go; but they are insufficient. These measures are all good and necessary; but inadequate, unless something more radical still be adopted along with them. Alone they are mere palliatives. They may serve to conceal the sore, perhaps assuage its pain; but they cannot cure it.

Universal suffrage is little better than a mockery, where the voters are not socially equal. No matter what party you support, no matter what men you elect, property is always the basis of your governmental action. No policy has ever yet been pursued by our government, state or federal, under one party or another, notwithstanding our system of universal suffrage, which has had for its aim the elevation of man, independent of his relation as a possessor of property. In no instance have the rights of the proletary prevailed over the interests of the proprietor. To separate power from property, we hold to be impossible under our present system. Its interests will always predominate in the measures of government,



though they may sometimes be defeated in elections. The interests of property may now and then be divided, as they were under General Jackson's administration. The interests of the state banks, and particularly of those of New York, were then opposed to those of the United States Bank. The interests of landed property combined with those of labor are now arrayed against the banks generally; and if they are successful, it will not be because the interests of labor count for anything; but because the farming and planting interests are stronger than the mercantile and manufacturing interests. The proletaries, though voters in this contest, serve merely to swell the forces of one or the other party. They gain nothing by the fact that they are voters; they will gain, however, if the landed interests triumph; because, in the actual condition of our country, the interest of the laborer is mainly identified with those of land. But, let which interest will triumph, the laborer will gain nothing directly. He will only gain so far as it is impossible to separate his interest from the interest which triumphs. Still, universal suffrage is a right, and is worth something. All we mean to say is, that in itself, it by no means constitutes a sovereign remedy for the evils under which the laboring classes suffer. It by no means gives them that degree of political power, which theorists imagine. To be rendered efficient, it must be coupled with something like equality of fortunes. The proprietors may indeed sometimes be outvoted in an election, but their interests will invariably triumph in the legislative halls, and at the tribunals of justice. At least, this has been the experience of this country thus far. We will hope that the future will furnish a different experience.

The system of free trade, so far as it has as yet been advocated in this country, we approve, as a means of social amelioration; but we cannot rely on it, as alone sufficient. Because, to amount to much, the competitors must start even, and with nearly equal chances

of success, which cannot be, with our present constitution of property, nor, indeed, with our present constitution of human nature. Moreover, if the system of free trade be pushed to its last results, it becomes the introduction of a system of universal competition, a system of universal strife, where each man is for himself, and no man for another. It would be a return to the pure individuality of the savage state, the abolition of all government, and the adoption, as the practical rule of conduct, of the maxim, "save who can." We have not yet advanced far enough in moral or social science to adopt this rule. We would indeed restrict as much as possible the sphere of government, and enlarge that of the individual; but government, as the organ and agent of society, is a positive good, and can never be dispensed with. We have, moreover, no faith in bringing about the social order we desire, by the agency of selfishness and strife. True democracy can never rest permanently on the maxim, "I am as good as you;" but it must resort to this other maxim, "You are as good as I." The spirit, by which it must ultimately be sustained, is not the spirit that will not submit to tyranny, but the spirit that will not tyrannize.

In universal education and religious culture, we have faith indeed; but not as final measures. Their office is to generate the moral force needed; but the generation of that force is not the reform. Mind is undoubtedly superior to matter, and all reforms must come from within; but the mental and moral reform, effected in the interior of man, will prove insufficient, unless it come out of the interior, and remodel the exterior. What we contend is not, that free trade, universal suffrage, universal education, and religious culture, are not essential, indispensable means to the social regeneration we are in pursuit of; but that, if we stop with them, and leave the material order of society untouched, they will prove inadequate. We make no war on the political reformer, nor on the moral reformer. Our plan includes all they propose, and more

too. Ours includes that, without which theirs would accomplish little.

With this view of the case, it becomes necessary to seek something more ultimate, more radical than our most approved reformers have as yet ventured upon. This something we have professed to find in the abolition of hereditary property, a measure foreshadowed in the first number of this Journal, and implied, at least in our own mind, by almost every article we have ever written on the subject of social reform. We have long been thoroughly convinced that, without resorting to some such measure, it would be useless to talk of social progress, or to speak in behalf of the laborer.

The doctrine we have long labored to maintain is, that the work of this country is to emancipate labor, by raising up the laborer from a mere workman, without capital, to be a proprietor, and a workman on his own farm, or in his own shop. Those who have read our writings, or listened to our public lectures and addresses, must have perceived this. In maintaining this doctrine, we have been seconded by not a few. We have been censured for it by no party, and by no individuals, save a few who have never accepted the doctrine, that all men are born with equal rights.

Moreover, we have been associated, to some extent, with a political party, unsurpassed in this or any other country for its intelligence, and general devotion to the good of mankind, which is confessedly an anti-monopoly party; in the language of one of its official papers, penned by one of its brightest ornaments, and one of the most eloquent expounders of its creed, "The party of equality against privilege."\* From the favor with which our own doctrine has been received, and from the official declaration of a great and powerful party, we have felt that we were authorized to infer that a large portion, at least, of

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\* See the Address of the Democratic State Convention, holden at Worcester, Massachusetts, Sept. 20, 1837.



our countrymen, believe it the duty of every true American to labor for the utter extinction of all privilege, and for the complete emancipation of labor by raising up each individual laborer to be an independent proprietor.

Now we would ask, how is it possible to gain the end here implied, without a change in the present constitution of property? We go for "equality against privilege," say the Worcester Convention, but how can this be done without abolishing hereditary property? Hereditary property is either a privilege or it is not. If it is not, if it confer no social advantage on him who inherits it over him who does not, then there can be no harm in seeking to abolish it; for what we propose to abolish is declared to be valueless. If it be a privilege, then we must labor to abolish it, or cease to go with a party whose motto is "equality against privilege." But hereditary property, unless the amount inherited by each individual could be rendered equal, is unquestionably a privilege. It gives, and always must give, to one portion of the community an advantage over the rest, to which they are entitled by no natural superiority of intellect, or of virtue. Will the public conscience, then, of the American people tolerate it? Will it sanction privilege? Does it not in fact harmonize with the declaration of the Worcester Convention, and therefore necessarily demand the abolition of hereditary property?

✓ The American people may be mistaken as to men and measures, but we are confident that in principle, they will all assent to the doctrine of equality. We feel confident of their unanimous support, when we say that all the members of the community should have, so far as society is concerned, equal chances. But equal chances imply equal starting points. Nobody, it would seem, could pretend that where the points of departure were unequal the chances could be equal. Do the young man inheriting ten thousand pounds, and the one whose inheritance is merely the gutter, start even? Have they equal chances? It may be said both

are free to rise as high as they can, — one starting with ten thousand pounds in advance, and the other starting with the gutter. But it might as well be said the chances of the eldest son of the Duke of Newcastle, and those of the eldest son of one of the lowest of the Duke's tenants, are equal, since both unquestionably are free to rise as high as they can, — one starting with a dukedom in advance, and the other with nothing. But to pretend this is mere jesting.

But why stop with hereditary property? why not have hereditary magistrates, hereditary professors, hereditary priests; hereditary legislators, hereditary governors, and an hereditary president? Hereditary distinction, that is to say, distinction founded on birth, once admitted as just in principle, we see not how can you consistently stop without pushing it to its last consequences. Be this, however, as it may; if society, so far as it depends on her, — as Americans, to say the least, very generally believe, — is bound to furnish equal chances to all her members, hereditary property must unquestionably be abolished; unless, what will amount to the same thing, a plan be devised and carried into operation, by which the portion inherited by each shall be absolutely equal.

Again, there is no man among us who will have the hardihood to maintain, in general thesis, that the present horizontal division of society ought to be preserved. No whig will maintain, we may presume, since our whigs claim to be more democratic than the democrats themselves, that there ought always to be a class of proletaries dependent on a class of capitalists; nor can there be found one who will in just so many words deny our statement, that the mission of this country is to enfranchise and dignify labor by making every man a proprietor and laborer on his own capital. Now, starting with the present division of society into capitalists and proletaries, this cannot be done without abolishing hereditary property. Under the present constitution of property, we have shown, when treating of the condition of the proletaries, that

individuals from this class rise, only by using the class itself as the lever of their elevation; consequently, all the individuals of the class cannot possibly rise. This point is not sufficiently considered. Because individuals are constantly rising from the class, it is rashly inferred that the whole class may rise. But in point of fact the numbers of the proletaries are everywhere on the increase. We see this in our own country; and in England they have risen since 1800, from one half to five out of every seven of the whole population. These grand manufacturing and commercial establishments and enterprises, by which so much wealth is produced and accumulated, have little other effect on the proletaries than the augmentation of their number. Assuredly, under our present system, the number of proletaries in proportion to the proprietors is constantly on the increase. How long, then, will it take under this system to make every man a proprietor?

The proposition, for the abolition of hereditary property, it follows from these considerations, is merely a logical conclusion from the admitted premises of the American people, and, *a fortiori*, of the democratic party. We have merely followed the invincible law of logic in putting it forth. We are compelled, either to abandon the American theory of government and society, or else contend for the abolition of hereditary property; and they who censure us as a rash innovator, and call us "infamous" for choosing the latter alternative, are either false in their professions of attachment to American principles, or from two given ideas incapable of inferring a third.

Are we wrong? What in one word is this American system? Is it not the abolition of all artificial distinctions, all social advantages founded on birth or any other accident, and leaving every man to stand on his own feet, for precisely what God and nature have made him? Does not this system declare that society should make no distinction between the child of the rich man and the child of the poor man; that she shall



neither reward the child for the virtues, nor punish him for the vices of the parent? Is this the American system, yes or no? If it be not, what mean all our boasts of equality, all our Fourth of July oratory, all our patriotic songs and national glorifications? What else is it that we are constantly throwing in the face of the old world? and on what else do we profess to found our claims to admiration and imitation? Everybody knows that this is the system, which the American people profess, and to which they stand committed before the world. We pray them, then, to tell us how with this system, which repudiates all distinctions founded on birth, they can reconcile hereditary property, which has no other basis than the accident of birth on which to rest? The logic by which they can do it is above, or below, our comprehension.

But property we are told is a sacred institution. Touch it and you throw everything into confusion, cut society loose from all its old fastenings, and send us all back to the savage state, to live by plundering and devouring one another. So said the defenders of hereditary monarchy, of hereditary nobility, of an hereditary priesthood, of primogeniture and entail. Yet society survives, and, for aught we can see, looks as likely for a long life as ever it did. Now, for ourselves, we are not quite so squeamish on this subject as some others are. We believe property should be held subordinate to man, and not man to property; and therefore that it is always lawful to make such modifications of its constitution as the good of Humanity requires.

But, without insisting on the paramount claim of Humanity, we will relieve the apprehensions of those who pay their devotions at the shrine of Mammon, by hastening to say, that we plant ourselves on the ground of *strict right*, and propose no changes in the constitution of property, which we do not think ourselves able to justify on this ground; nay, none which are not demanded by it.

Man's right to property is virtually denied by the

Christian clergy generally. They contend that we are merely the Lord's stewards, entrusted with the management of certain properties, which we hold not as our own, and which we are bound to employ not in our own service, but in the service of the Church. The right is also denied, by a certain class of modern philanthropists, who say that the property, which one man calls his own, is not really his, but belongs to whomsoever has the greater need. These and the clergy, however, address themselves to the individual conscience, and not to the social conscience, and, therefore, their views, whether right or wrong, come not within the scope of our present inquiry. We, for ourselves, admit man's right to property, and his right, within the limits of the moral law, to do what he will with it.

The origin of the right to property, whether viewed historically or philosophically, is an interesting branch of inquiry, but we cannot treat it at length now, nor is it necessary for our present purpose. In relation to its origin, three theories have gained considerable currency. The first, that of the jurists, is that property is solely a *creature of political or civil institutions*; the second, which also finds favor with some jurists, but principally with philosophers, is that of *first or original occupancy*; the last is called the *theory of formation*, and founds the right of property on creation, production.

The last theory we admit, to its fullest extent. A man has a natural right to call that his, which he himself, by his own labor, has created. But this is not all the property to which he has a natural right. But to what other property, and how much, he has a natural right, we shall soon proceed to inquire.

The first theory we also admit, to a certain extent, indeed to its fullest extent, so far as concerns present proprietors. The property, which the law now appropriates to an individual, he has a right to call his own, use as his own, and keep safe from the reach of the legislature. The legislature is bound to keep

good faith with those for whom it legislates ; it must faithfully, scrupulously fulfil its contracts. If it has committed mistakes with regard to its appropriations, it must abide by these till it can rectify them, without breaking its faith with the individual in whose favor they were committed. Whatever alterations, then, we would suggest in regard to the constitution of property, we would propose none, which should affect any present proprietor, or any one who should be a proprietor when the alteration passed into a law.

But, though we admit that the law gives a title to property good enough for present proprietors, we are very far from regarding the law as ultimate, very far from admitting that property is purely a creature of civil or political institutions, and that, therefore, society may declare what it will to be property, and adopt what rule of distribution or transmission it pleases. Society is under law, and is as much bound to consult the right as is the meanest individual, and it has no right to enact what rests not on a higher law than its will ; what, in one word, is not decreed by the law of Nature, or the will of God.

The second theory, which, we believe, is the prevailing one, and which has the most respectable authority in its support, that of *first or original occupancy*, we also admit ; but not to the full extent to which it seems to be admitted by the authors who have supported it. The first occupant of a thing or of a spot of land, has unquestionably a right to what he occupies, against every one who would dispossess him, provided that his occupancy be not a prejudice to another, who has equal claims with himself. In other words, the right of the first occupant is limited by a right more ultimate still.

To render this plain. Man's right to the earth, to possess it, cultivate it, and enjoy its fruits, is Divine, and rests on the will of the Creator. The evidences of this are in the Bible, in man's constitution, in the simple fact, that man is placed here under circumstances, which render his possession of the earth indis-



pensable to his very subsistence. God gave the earth to the children of men. All admit this. But writers on this subject, tell us that he gave it to them as common property.

This last we deny. We recognise no such thing as *common* property. The very essence of property is individual, peculiar, exclusive. The Creator has made man with an original, an innate sense of property. We see man everywhere appropriating something to himself, and calling it his own. The ideas of *mine* and *thine* are among the earliest developed in the human mind. Now by creating man with this innate sense of property, and endowing him with faculties for its acquisition, the Creator has plainly declared it his will, that man should possess property. "Man," says Chancellor Kent, "was fitted and intended, by the Author of his being, for society and government, and for the acquisition and enjoyment of property." "The sense of property is inherent in the human breast."\* We may, therefore, lay it down as established, or admitted, that man was created not to hold property in common, but to hold individual property, as something which he might call his own, and of which no individual, nor society even, could rightfully dispossess him.

Our inference from this is not that the earth was given to mankind, as a common property, but as an inheritance, to be possessed by each as individual property. The question then comes up, in what proportions shall it be possessed? That is, to how much was any one individual entitled, for his share of the general inheritance? To answer this question, it is simply necessary to ascertain what is the relation which men bear towards one another before their Maker, and what relation they ought to bear towards one another before society. Christianity answers the first, and Democracy the second. As we in this country profess to be both Christians and

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\* 2 Kent's Com. Vol. II. p. 256.

Democrats, the answers of these are sufficiently ultimate for our present purpose.

According to Christianity, all men are equal before God. This is the great truth Christianity has placed in the world; and it is the glory of the Church, that even in the times of its grossest corruption, it has always maintained this truth. God has made of one blood all the nations of men. The Church, therefore, in its theory, has admitted no distinction of race, of bond or free, of rich or poor, and has ordered the same discipline to prince and peasant, and read the same solemn service over their ashes. Democracy, the creature of this truth, or indebted to the activity of this truth for its development, declares that all men are equal in their rights, that man measures man the world over. ✓

Now, if all men are equal before God, if God be no respecter of persons, then, he must have designed the earth to be possessed by them in equal portions; and if, as Democracy asserts, all men have equal rights, then it follows, that all have a right to equal portions. That is to say, according to both Christianity and Democracy, every man had a right of property to a portion of the whole, equal to that of every other man. Divide the whole by the number of men, and the quotient will be the amount which each might call his own. ✓

This is the abstract right of property to the earth as God gave it to man, and this is the right which limits the right of the *first occupant*. Original occupancy gives to the first occupant a right of property to this particular thing, or this particular spot, in preference to that, provided the claim thus acquired do not stretch over more than, in an equal division of the whole, would have fallen to the occupant's share. With this limitation, we admit the right of the first occupant, and that occupancy is not only the original, but a valid title to property. ✓

Speaking strictly, and keeping in view the limitations we have made, man has a right of property, 1. To

that, of which he is the original occupant; 2. To that which he, by his own labor, has produced, with or without the aid of the funds of production rightfully held; and, 3. To that which society, by law, appropriates to him. This last title may not be good in morals, but is in general good against society itself, so far, at least, as concerns the present proprietor; for society has seldom the right to revoke its grants. The expectations, it has itself formally and deliberately created, it is bound to satisfy.

Having settled what is property, and to how much a man may have a good title, we proceed now to inquire the extent of this title. Is it unlimited, or has it a natural term of expiration? The authorities, we have consulted on this subject, pretty generally agree, that the title of a man to property is necessarily extinguished at his natural death.

“The title to property,” says Chancellor Kent, “resting originally in occupancy, that title ceased of course, upon the death of the occupant.”\*

“Property, both in lands and movables,” says Sir William Blackstone, “being thus originally acquired by the first taker, which taking amounts to a declaration, that he intends to appropriate the thing to his own use, it remains in him, by the principles of universal law, till such time as he does some other act, which shows an intention to abandon it, for then it becomes, naturally speaking, *publici juris* once more, and is liable to be again appropriated by the next occupant.” And again. “The most universal and effectual way of abandoning property, is by the death of the occupant; when both the actual possession, and intention of keeping possession ceasing, the property, which is founded on such possession and intention, ought also to cease of course. For, naturally speaking, the instant a man ceases to be, he ceases to have any dominion; else, if he had a right to dispose of his acquisitions one moment beyond his life, he would also have a right to direct their disposal for a million of ages after him; which would be highly absurd and inconvenient. *All property, therefore, must cease upon death, considering men as absolute individuals, and unconnected with civil society.*”†

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\* 2 Kent's Com. 263.

† 2 Black. Com. 9, 10.



Jefferson says, in a letter to Mr. Madison, dated Paris, Sept. 6, 1789, that the course of reflection, in which he had engaged on the elementary principles of society, had convinced him, that one generation of men has no power to bind another.

"I set out," he says, "on this ground, which I suppose to be self-evident, that the *earth belongs in usufruct to the living*; that the dead have neither powers nor rights over it. *The portion occupied by any individual ceases to be his, when he himself ceases to be, and reverts to society.*" \*

Bentham says; "Property and law are born together, and die together. Before laws were made, there was no property; take away the laws, and property ceases." †

This dictum of Bentham, if it be admitted, harmonizes with the others; by denying all natural right to property, it leaves the whole subject open to the adoption of such conventional titles, as may be judged most useful. Locke's principle is virtually the same. He founds property on a primitive contract, which contract is of course alterable by consent of the contracting parties.

Mirabeau says; "It seems to me that the difference between the right of a man to dispose of his property during his life, and that of disposing of it after his death, is not less than the difference between life and death itself. Death engulphs equally a man's rights and himself." — "*The rights of a man in the fact of property cannot extend beyond the term of his existence.*" ‡ MM. Portalis, Tronchet, Bigot-Premeneu, and Malleville, in their Preliminary Discourse to the *projet du code civil*, presented to the government, 24 Thermidor, year VIII., say; "The right of property in itself is a direct institution of Nature, and the manner of its exercise is an accessory, a development, a consequence of the right itself. *But the right of property ends with the life of the proprietor.*"

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\* Memoir, Correspondence, &c. Edited by T. J. Randolph, Vol. III. p. 27.

† Bentham. Theory of Legislation. Translated by R. Hildreth. Vol. I. p. 139.

‡ *Lignage de Mirabeau sur l'Egalité des partages dans successions en ligne directe.* Prononcé après sa mort, par l'évêque d'Autun, M. le prince Talleyrand, à l'Assemblée Nationale.

Here is a very respectable string of authorities, and some of them of great weight with the conservative portion of the community. Kent and Blackstone cannot be accused of ultra-radicalism, nor of any disposition to weaken the security of property. The other authorities, we trust, will weigh somewhat with our democratic friends. The proposition in our article, which gave so much offence, is virtually the same with Jefferson's. He says, "the portion occupied by any individual ceases to be his, when he himself ceases to be, and reverts to society." We say, a man's "power over his property must cease with his life, and his property then become the property of the state, to be disposed of by some equitable law, for the use of the generation which takes his place." Jefferson merely declares what is natural law on this subject; and we, that the actual arrangements of society should be conformed to that law. This is all the difference there is between us in principle, although he, in laying down the principle, had one object in view, and we another.

If there be any weight due to these authorities, the right of a man to hold and to control property ceases at death. What was his property during life is no longer his, when he himself no longer exists. Property implies an owner, and it is not property, when it has no owner. Ownership must also be real, not imaginary, and demands an active agency. But at death, the owner ceases to be, and of course his estate is left without an owner. Ownership also implies dominion; but, as Blackstone says, "the instant a man ceases to be, he ceases to have any dominion."

We assume it, then, as established, that a man's natural right to property expires at his death. Then, it follows, as a matter of course, that he has no natural right to dispose of it by will or testament, to be effective after his death. This is maintained by Jefferson. "But the child, the *legatee*, the creditor, takes it not by *natural right*, but by a law of the society of

which he is a member, and to which he is subject.”\* So Blackstone, as we have seen. “Else,” says he, “if he had a right to dispose of his acquisitions one moment beyond his life, he would also have the right to direct their disposal for a million of ages after him; which would be highly absurd and inconvenient.” The testamentary right now enjoyed by men is then a conventional and not a natural right. The man has no natural right to dispose of his property beyond the term of his natural life. At the moment of his decease, so far as natural right is concerned, what was his property, is vacated, and stands in precisely the same condition the earth did, when it was open to the first occupant; at least so far as relates to its former owner.

Whose then is this property? Has it any owner? Jefferson says “it reverts to society,” and Blackstone says, “it becomes *publici juris* once more, and is liable to be again appropriated by the next occupant.” But by natural law ought it not to descend to the children of the deceased, or in failure of these, to the next of kin? Jefferson says no. “The child takes it not by natural right, but by a law of the society of which he is a member.”† Blackstone says, “The right of inheritance, or descent to the children and other relations of the deceased, seems to have been allowed much earlier than the right of devising by testament. We are apt to conceive at first view, that it has nature on its side; yet we often mistake for nature what we find established by long and inveterate custom. It is certainly a wise and effectual, but clearly a *political*, establishment.\* All the authorities already quoted, with the exception of Chancellor Kent, maintain the doctrine of Blackstone and Jefferson. And to these authorities we may add that of Montesquieu, in the *Spirit of Laws*, and of the celebrated Pascal. Indeed, this doctrine is admitted by all our existing legislation on the subject. If the children and other rela-

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\* Memoir, &c. p. 28.

† 2 Black. Com. 11.



tions of the deceased have a natural right to inherit the property he leaves, then the right of the proprietor to devise his property by testament, is denied. Nature has determined the mode in which the property should be transmitted, and of course the proprietor has no option as to its disposition. Now the law in granting him the right to devise by testament to whom he pleases, and even to disinherit his children, and all his relations, excepting his wife, as he now legally may, evidently denies the natural right of the children and relations to inherit. If the children have a natural right to the property of the father, then the father can have no natural right to disinherit them, or to make an arbitrary disposition of his property.

But again, admitting our American system, that blood should make no distinction, that society has no right to reward the child according to the merit, nor to punish him according to the demerit of the father, then it follows, that the child stands in relation to the property of the father, precisely as stands any other individual, having equal and only equal claims to the inheritance.

Chancellor Kent seems to think that the descent of property to the children and relatives of the deceased "is dictated by the voice of nature." By the voice of nature, we can hardly believe this eminent jurist means natural law. The voice of nature dictates to the parent to seek the welfare of the child. The parental instinct, which, we presume, is all the Chancellor means by the voice of nature, would no doubt lead the parent to distinguish his child, and that also to the detriment even of the children of other parents. A case of this is recorded in a law book of the very highest authority. We mean the New Testament. The mother of Zebedee's children came to Jesus with her two sons, James and John, and prayed that they might sit with him in his kingdom, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. Here was the voice of nature, speaking through parental instinct. The answer of Jesus is the voice of God speaking in

the form of natural law. "To sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given *them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*" That is to say, parental affection must always be subordinated to the will of God, or what is the same thing, to natural justice, or natural law, natural right.

Blackstone and others, although they abandon the natural right of children to inherit, defend hereditary property on the ground of convenience. They say it is a wise and effectual, although a political or civil establishment. For our part, we hold society bound to obey the law of nature. She has herself no law-making power, and is bound to consult and follow, as nearly as may be, the law enacted by the Creator. If, then, we can show that God, through natural law, has determined whose and in what proportions the property vacated by the death of its former owner really is, we have no occasion to resort to considerations of convenience or expediency. Whose then in reality is the property vacated by the death of the former proprietor?

Jefferson says, "it reverts to society;" Blackstone, that "it becomes *publici juris* once more." We have seen that it belongs not to its former owner, for he has ceased to be; we have also seen that it does not belong necessarily to the children and relations of the deceased, whose claims are equal and only equal to the claims of others. Whose then is it? Evidently, it belongs to society, in like manner as the earth belonged to the human family, when approached by the first occupants. It then belongs not to society as common property, to be possessed by the whole in common, because we have already established man's right to individual property, and shown that common property is a solecism. The individuals of whom society is composed possess then the property not as common property, but have a right to it in severalty.

We have recognised three titles to property, first, original occupancy; second, production; third, law,

or the award of society. As it concerns the property held by the second title, that of production, we have in our present inquiry nothing to do. What a man produces by his own labor is his own, and so long as he uses it within the limits of the moral law, it is sacred, and must not be touched by the legislature,—except its quota of the necessary expenses of the state. That which is held by occupancy, except by occupancy through acknowledged fraud, together with that held by virtue of law, we would not touch in the case of any present proprietor, or in the case of any one who shall be a proprietor, at the time when the change in the constitution of property we contend for may be enacted into a law. Still, all that amount of property held by the first and third titles, we have specified, is constantly becoming vacated by the death of proprietors. Whose is this property, when it thus becomes vacated, and who has the natural right to enter upon it?

To help us answer this question, let us distinguish in theory, which, however, we shall not need to do in our practical arrangements, between the property actually produced by the present generation, and that which it has inherited from past generations. Now, these two classes of property are perfectly distinct in principle. We will waive the first class, for the present; because it must become, as it will with the next generation, a portion of the second class, before it can become subject to the new law, we would have enacted with regard to property. The second class includes the land, except so far as the labors of the present generation have increased its value, with all the various funds of production of every name and nature, all the accumulation of utilities under man's material relations, which this generation has inherited from all the past. Now, suppose that this vast accumulation, this vast amount of utilities, had been all abandoned by the last generation at once; whose, in that case, would it have been? Who could have claimed it as theirs by right? Unquestionably it would have fallen



to the new generation, who would have had the right to enter upon it as having, as Blackstone says, become *publici juris* once more, and to appropriate it to themselves.

But in what proportions might it have been entered upon, and appropriated by individuals? We have already answered this question by fixing the limits to the title of the first occupant. We have proved that the children of the proprietor have no natural right to inherit his estate. They then stand in the same condition with the rest of the generation. We have no question then to ask concerning the proportions in which individuals of the generation, now no more, possessed the property vacated. The children of the rich and the poor, therefore, have equal claims to inheritance. In what proportions, then, may the property, now vacated by the death of the generation which owned it, be entered upon by the individuals of the generation which now is? If all men are equal before God, as both reason and Christianity assert, then all men have equal claims, so far as this property may be considered the gift of God. One man can then rightfully receive no more for his share than falls to the lot of another. If, again, all men should be equal in their rights before society, as Democracy asserts, and as all Americans profess to believe, then also must the claims of all be admitted to be equal. Then one man can rightfully appropriate to himself no more than, in an equal division of the whole among all the members of the new generation, would be his share.

All will at once admit the correctness of this conclusion in the case we have supposed. Is it not equally correct in relation to the case as it actually happens? The distinction which we have made of property into two classes actually exists. The property which we include in the second class is not imaginary, it is now really possessed. But portions of this are daily and hourly becoming vacant, by the death of the proprietor; and the practical question for society is, How shall this portion, which this hour

is vacated by the death of the proprietor, be reappropriated? Surely on the same principle that the whole should be reappropriated, were the whole to be vacated at once. This rule is the rule of equality.

If there be any force in the considerations we have presented, we have demonstrated that, according to natural law, a man has no right over the property he possesses, any longer than he lives; that his children have no natural right to inherit his estate, and stand in relation to it precisely as the children of a stranger; and furthermore, that the property vacated by the death of its former owner, the individual members of society hold not as common property, but in severalty, and in equal shares. If we have demonstrated thus much, we have demonstrated all we undertook to demonstrate. We have shown that our proposition to abolish hereditary property, and to dispose of it by some equitable law for the use of the new generation, is founded in natural right, and is demanded by the law of natural justice.

But we are told this scheme is impracticable. When we have demonstrated that a measure is just, we have little time to spend in proving it practicable. Those, who call justice impracticable, must remember that it is not us whom they arraign, but the Creator. To our mind, the measure we propose is feasible enough, if it only be the will of society to adopt it. But perhaps its feasibility does not strike all minds as forcibly as our own. We shall do well then to glance a moment at what it is that we really propose.

We do not suppose the measure can be carried into effect immediately; we do not suppose that society will take any action on it farther than to discuss it, till more than one generation shall pass away; but we will, for the sake of illustration, suppose the measure is to be immediately enacted into a law. No change is to be made affecting any present proprietor, nor disturbing the natural expectations raised by existing laws. The measure will take effect only on such portions of property as become successively vacated

by the death of their owner. These portions are not to become the property of society, nor of the state, to be held by it as public property, and capable of being used for public purposes. They do not go into the fisc. The state does not supplant the heir, and become the inheritor. But these portions, as they become successively vacated, are to be reappropriated to individuals. But they must be reappropriated to individuals of the new generation, and not to the individuals of the old, — to individuals commencing in life, not to individuals already established.

In order to get at this, say, establish a system of universal education, at the public expense, in which all the children of the community shall be educated and supported by the community, till they are able to support themselves. Let this education be both general and special, embracing what is commonly understood by education, and also the special qualifications for some pursuit or calling in life. When the education is completed, the trade or profession acquired, and the individual scholar is ready to establish himself in life, then let him receive the portion of the property to be reappropriated, which falls to his share.

These individuals will be constantly coming of age, and old proprietors will be constantly passing off. Hence, as property is vacated, new occupants appear, and as new occupants appear, property is vacated. The numbers of those who die, and of those who become of age, may not, indeed, be precisely equal; but statistics will soon settle the difference with sufficient accuracy for all practical purposes.

In order to get at the proportion due to each, a general valuation as now of all the property of the commonwealth will need to be made. The general valuation of all the property in the commonwealth once fixed, the simple rule of division will determine how much is the portion of the new occupant. Then a valuation of that vacated will determine how much of it must be allotted to one individual. This will require about the same trouble in taking a list, and



making out the valuation of the property of the commonwealth, which is now required for the purposes of taxation.

The young man, starting in life, receives his portion, which serves him for an outfit, as a capital with which to commence operations. With this he goes forth into the world, and has what he can honestly acquire. If one acquires more than another, that is his gain; if less, that is his loss. The property he receives to commence with may be regarded as his share of the general inheritance. In receiving an equal share with his co-heirs, God and society have dealt equally by him. In giving, in this way, an equal share to all of what we have shown belongs in equal portions to all, society treats all her members alike. But, after having done this, which depended on her, she leaves them to fare according to their works. Society is not required to keep them equal, or to labor to make them equal. She is simply obliged to treat them as equals, so far as she is concerned. She must, in that which it belongs to her to do, treat them all alike, and give no advantage to one over another. But, if one can honestly, by his own exertions, become richer than another, that is his own affair, with which she has nothing to do.

It is no part of our plan, that the idle and profligate should fare alike with the industrious and thrifty. What we ask is, that society shall, in the distribution of that, which none of the generation it concerns have had any hand in producing or accumulating, should treat all alike, for thus far the claims of all are equal. We ask this not because we contend against inequality of property, but because we would have all the inequalities, which do or may obtain, depend not on the unequal reappropriations of what comes down from another generation, but on the personal character and exertions of the individual proprietors. We have never been known in our life to contend for equality of possessions, nor against inequalities of property. We war solely against the unequal division which so-

ciety makes of that portion of the general wealth of the community, which it is her office to distribute. It is not the inequality introduced by differences of character, of talent, or aptitude for the accumulation of property, that we object to ; but that which is created by the laws. We commend this distinction to the attention of our readers generally. It will save them from much useless declamation. All we ask is, that men should, so far as society is concerned, be dealt by as equals, and after that, in all that depends on themselves, be treated according to their works. It is not so now. Society gives to the child of the rich man an estate to begin with, and to the child of the poor man nothing. The property, then, which we find in men's possession, is not a just measure of their capacity, nor of their works. This is a wrong, and a wrong which brings many others in its train.

But we are told, that our plan would bear exceedingly hard upon the widow and the orphan. As soon as a man dies, the state takes his property, and the widow and the orphan must be sent to the almshouse. This objection, we confess, we had not anticipated. It is formidable, and appeals to our sensibilities ; nevertheless, they who urge it have paid but a sorry compliment to their own inventive powers. The children, if minors, it will be seen, are provided for in the school, where they fare the same they would were the father living. If they are majors, they receive their portion, and are at work for themselves, on their own estates. As for the widow, we will hope that, if young, as soon as decency permits her to lay aside her mourning weeds, she will marry again ; if old, why, she must take refuge in her jointure. But seriously, we would propose that, in the reappropriation, the distinction of sex should not play the important part it does now. In all that concerns property, woman should share equally with man, and like him be an independent proprietor, a relation which marriage should not necessarily affect. We know of no reason why the property of the wife should become that of the husband,

any more than that the husband's should become the property of the wife. The sexes are equal, though diverse, and fitted for different spheres; but the idea of dependence should never necessarily attach to the one more than to the other. Marriage, again, should never be regarded as a marriage of estates, but of persons, and hearts. Each should have the means of living independent of that relation. Then, in marriage, man and woman could come together as equals, and because they loved each other, and not because one or the other wanted an estate. Marriage would then be, what it now is not always, a sacred institution, and the relation it creates would be pure and holy, and kept by both sacred and inviolable, as it should be. But be this as it may, the objection is answered by making woman an independent proprietor, in like manner as man, and by establishing, as we propose, a system of education, which will ensure the instruction and maintenance of all the children of the community, till they are capable of maintaining themselves.

We are told, again, that our proposed reform would bear exceedingly severe upon the poor workingmen, who have, from their hard earnings, saved a little, in the hopes of leaving it to their children. But along now comes a pretended friend of these workingmen, and tells them, "No, you shall not leave your scanty savings to your children, you love so well. It must go to the state, and your children be left —"; pray go on, and tell us how the children are to be left? Never, for the sake of truth, convert your pathos into bathos. In the first place, we reply to this objection, that we propose our plan to aid the children of these poor workingmen, not to injure them. We say to these workingmen, your children have a natural and indefeasible right not to the little you can save out of your necessities to leave them, but to *an equal portion with the children of the rich, of the whole property which descends from one generation to another.* How much above the general average to each individual,



will rise the modicum you can leave your children? Will it not, in fact, fall below the general average? How much, then, will your children lose by the proposed change in the transmission and reappropriation of property? The children of the rich will inherit less than they now do; but the children of the hard-working poor will inherit more.

We are told, again, that the proposed change will amount to nothing, "because a man can give away all his property just before his death, and that gift society must respect. In this way, property may descend as now." To this we answer, first, that a man rarely knows the precise hour when he shall die, and, therefore, death may surprise him before he has made his gift, and the necessary transfer of his property. Consequently, there would always be a large number of cases, that could not be affected by this objection. A gift, must be more than a gift *in mente*; it must be an actual delivery of the property into the possession of the donee. Now there are many men, though they believe they shall die soon, who do by no means like to part with all their property to their children, and thus render themselves wholly dependent in their old age. There are too many Regans and Gonerils, and too few Cordelias in private life, to render this always prudent, or safe. From this cause a large addition may always be looked for to the number of cases, not liable to be affected by the objection we are considering.

In the second place, we may distinguish between gifts *inter vivos*, and gifts *causa mortis*. The first class of gifts must undoubtedly be respected; but the second class, when made with the evident design of controlling the transmission of one's estate, or of directing, in some sense, its disposal after one's death, should be held void, and revocable at the will of society. We have proved that a man has no right to direct the disposal of his property for one moment after his death; if, then, he transfers his property to another before his death, for the purpose of determin-

ing its descent, he is seeking to evade the law, and, therefore, cannot call upon society to respect the transfer. He is doing indirectly, what it is admitted that he has no right to do directly, and consequently, his acts are fraudulent. This distinction between gifts made between the living, from charitable or benevolent purposes, and those made with a view to a man's death, and for the purpose of exercising indirectly a sort of dominion after his death, is broad and obvious, and is recognised, in principle, very nearly as we have stated it, by existing laws.

But, it is said, waiving this objection, and assuming the practicability of the proposed change, that its effects will be bad, for it will check the spirit of enterprise, lessen the desire for the accumulation of property, consequently enervate industry, and lead to universal indolence and pauperism. Men are fruitful in objections, but they have not always regard to consistency in the objections they urge. We have seemed to ourselves to hear no little declamation from the pulpit, and elsewhere, against the general propensity of our countrymen to get money. This propensity, we have been told, is quite too strong, and the fruitful source of the greater part of the evils with which our society is afflicted. Grant, then, that our scheme will check this propensity, this, instead of being an objection, should be regarded as a recommendation. In fact, one of the strongest reasons we have for urging it is, that it will check, in some degree, the action of the propensity to accumulate.

Looking at society as it is, we cannot fail to perceive, that the passion for wealth is quite too absorbing. A large portion of our generation pursue it to the destruction of their health, and the peril of their soul's salvation, and the peace of the world. And why is it so? [Mainly, because the propensity to accumulate is, in our present order of civilization, reinforced by the love of independence and of distinction, and sanctified by the love of offspring.] Wealth, in the actual state of the world, gives independence and

distinction. Poverty in itself could be endured, did it not, in general, entail neglect, dependence, and, as it were, throw a man out of the pale of civilized society. Hence it is, men, who have somewhat of a manly nature, are impatient of it, and will be guilty of almost any crime, rather than remain poor. But, in a society, where fortunes are nearly equal, wealth confers no distinction, and especially if all the children are brought up in the same way, and at the same schools, and have the same general manners, cultivation, and refinement. Distinction in such a society cannot be acquired by one's possessions, but by what one is in oneself. Consequently, in the order of things we propose to bring about, wealth will not be sought for the distinction it confers. This will unquestionably check the action of the propensity to accumulate, to a considerable extent.

At present it is also necessary to acquire wealth, for the sake of our children. We could get along very well, and find much time for mental and moral culture, were it not, that we must accumulate something to give our children a start in the world. Under the proposed arrangement, anxiety for children will be somewhat diminished. We are sure, let happen what will, our children will fare as well as others, will be as well educated, and always be able, by moderate labor, to sustain themselves. This, again, will unquestionably diminish the desire to accumulate wealth.

The desire to accumulate wealth, diminished by the removal of these two sources, from which it is now constantly recruiting its strength, will, nevertheless, by no means be destroyed. The portion, which will fall to the lot of the individual on commencing life, will by no means suffice for his maintenance, without his personal exertions. It constitutes merely a fund, with which to commence operations. The man must still work, or soon starve. Then, again, wealth has its positive advantages. It enables a man to gather around him objects of taste, of science, and of comfort. It is, in a moderate degree, always desirable,



and will always be sought with more or less avidity. But, under the arrangement we propose, it will be sought merely for its direct, and not its incidental advantages.

Moreover, man is an active being, and loves action infinitely more than repose. Men have an aversion to labor, because now labor is not rendered attractive, and because it is associated with ideas of servitude, dependence, and vulgarity. It is too often performed in solitude, without the encouragement of warm-hearted, and enlightened companionship. The laziest man among us will angle or hunt all day. Gentlemen, fond of field sports, often exert themselves more than the common day laborer. Boys, wholly averse to hard work, will yet delight in still harder play. Strip labor of the degrading ideas now associated with it, render it as honorable, as much in keeping with the character of the gentleman, as fox-hunting is in England, and as attractive as the active plays of boys, and nobody would shun it; almost, everybody would delight in it for its own sake. When labor once comes to be performed by the enlightened and cultivated, and by men, who own the capital on which they labor, it will be honorable in the estimation of all, and soon be sought as an agreeable pastime. The first two considerations we have mentioned will reduce the propensity to accumulate within reasonable bounds; and the last two will tend to keep it there.

As to the universal pauperism so much dreaded, we have no fears. The actual increase of wealth would be much greater, under the new system, than the old; because, on the one hand, there would be less waste, and on the other, more and more skilfully directed labor; for all would labor, and all laborers would be thoroughly educated, not only generally, but specially. This part of our subject, we shall have another occasion to discuss, when, in our next number, we examine a recent work by Mr. Brisbane, on Association. And we shall be able to discuss it more at large then, than we can now.

One more objection we must notice, and then pass to the conclusion of this quite too protracted discussion. We are told, that our proposed reforms will break up the family relation. The necessity of such a result we do not see. It touches no family instincts, and in no case interferes with the affection of parents for their children, nor of children for their parents. It does not tend to separate or estrange them. Properties will be divided, as they are now. All the children of the same parents will not always reside on the homestead, and they do not now. What can be more scattered than are the different members of our families, under our present system? We find ourselves in a State, of which we are not a native, and the State, in which we were educated, was not the one in which we received our birth. We have a mother in one State, a grandmother in another, a brother in another, and another brother in a different State still. Our children grow up here in New England, but where they will finally settle, God only knows. They will be scattered abroad, some to the east, some to the south, some to the west, and some to the north. It would seem hardly possible to devise a system, which should more effectually separate families, than the present. What bad effect, then, will our proposition have on the family relation?

The family feeling, pride of family, we have a great respect for; and we take pleasure in tracing our own lineage back to some brave "cut-throat" of the dark ages; to some border chieftain of Scottish minstrelsy; but we have been taught by our religion, and by our philosophy, that the family is subordinate to Humanity, and that, though it is the centre of our affections, and the sphere in which lie our special duties, still it is in our love and action always to give place to mankind at large, and to universal justice. According to Christianity, the cause of Humanity is paramount to the claims of our relations, and we are to regard as members of our family, those who do the will of our Father in Heaven. That the arrangement

✓ [ we propose would do somewhat to break up the clan-  
nish feeling, which prevails, to some extent, even in  
this country, we believe, and for that reason we would  
effect it as well as for others.

We have now gone through with the principal objections, which we have heard urged against the article on the laboring classes, and offered such additional observations, as may enable the candid to catch some glimpses of our real views. The article in question presupposed nearly all that we had previously written in our Journal, and, of course, was liable to be misinterpreted by those, who read it by itself alone. This may answer, to some extent, as an apology for them, who have been quite industrious in holding us up to the community, as at war with Christianity, as opposed to education, and especially to the rights of property. We are happy to find some apology for them, and are sorry that we have not a more satisfactory one. They should have made themselves acquainted with our general views, and interpreted our particular remarks by our general principles, as laid down in our writings. To have done this, would have been no more than common justice; would have been only what was due to themselves, as well as to us. A moment's reflection would have assured them, that the conductor of this Journal could have no stronger motives for publishing false or dangerous doctrines, than have the editors of the newspapers, who have so liberally abused him. What motive have they for respecting religion, and the established order of things, that he has not also? He has his relations in life as well as they, and, perhaps, as much at stake. The world has given him credit for some literary and philosophical ability, and he might, perhaps, would he follow the beaten track, succeed as well as most men. He has nothing to gain by publishing unpopular doctrines, and running athwart popular prejudices. He may have some social feelings, and delight in friendship and society for himself and family. Why, then, shall



he labor to bring upon himself censure and reproach, to forego all the common courtesies and civilities of civilized life, compel himself to be looked upon as a sort of moral monster, and subject himself to be called "infamous," and "a ruffian"? When a man of tolerable understanding, of passsble acquaintance with the world, and some little reputation and standing, subjects himself voluntarily to all this, it is fully as likely to be from a good motive as a bad one.

To listen to our virtuous newspaper editors, one would think that they enjoyed a monopoly of virtue, patriotism, and religion, and that all, who chance to differ from them, are so many incarnate fiends, whose delight is in overturning all that is venerable, and in desecrating whatever is holy. But after all, who are these newspaper editors? Honorable gentlemen, it may be, but rarely as wise as Solomon, or as devout as David. They are, in general, men of routine, who have some passable skill in the use of the scissors, and in stringing together set words and phrases; but they are not men, who have watched long for truth, who have studied day and night to ascertain the meaning of what is passing around them. They are rarely men of thought, never men of ideas; and, what is more deplorable still, they have in themselves no measure for the man, who does really think, who has ideas, who looks through society, and sees what is, and what should be.

What do these men understand of the matters we have been discussing? Nothing, nothing at all, as their criticisms abundantly prove. Why can it not occur to them, that we may know as much of the matters on which we write, as they do? We have given years of intense study to the condition of the laboring classes, and the means of its amelioration. No doubt we may err; but does it never occur to these sapient editors, who have never given the subject an hour's serious thought, that we are no more liable to err than they are? All we ask of them is, to abandon a little of their arrogance, which by no means becomes them,

and to think it possible that, though they should die, some wisdom and virtue might still survive. But enough of such small matters.

We have been accused of proposing to rob the rich of their estates, and of proposing to do it by physical force. We think we have shown, in the foregoing, that ours is no scheme of robbery and plunder. We have planted ourselves on the Christian idea of man's equality to man, and on the innate sense of justice, which belongs to all men. What we have demanded, we have demanded in the name of Justice. Show us, that what we demand is unjust, or that it is not in accordance with natural right, and we have nothing more to say. Perhaps, however, that to some, who accuse us, the justice of our propositions is their greatest condemnation. There are people in the world, at least it is so said, whose chief apprehensions are, that justice may be done. We will hope, however, that these are but few, and that their number is daily diminishing.

With regard to physical force, we have not much to say. We see an immense system of wrong everywhere established, and everywhere upheld. This system is the growth of a hundred ages, and is venerable in the eyes of many; but it must be overthrown. Man must be free, and SHALL be free, — free to develop his lofty and deathless nature, and prove himself a child of God. This is in his destiny. But how can he become thus free? How can the huge system of accumulated wrongs, under which he now groans, be overthrown, and a new and better system introduced and established? Peaceably? We would fain hope so; but we fear not. We are well assured of one thing; that the reform party will not be the first to take up arms. It will proceed calmly and peaceably, but energetically to its work. It will use no arms but those of the intellect and the heart. It fixes its eye on Justice, and marches steadily towards its realization. Will the conservatives yield up peaceably their exclusive privileges? Will they consent that justice shall be real-

ized? If so, there will be no war. But we think we know the conservatives too well to believe this. A party that could collect together in this city, by hundreds, to mob a poor itinerant lecturer, and by thousands to consult on demolishing the post-office, because the postmaster insisted on obeying the laws, we do not believe will suffer the reform party to proceed quietly to the realization of its hopes. The proletaries will never resort to physical force; but that the masters may, for the purpose of keeping the proletaries in their present condition, we must believe, till we have some evidence to the contrary. They have already threatened it here. Distinguished members of Congress have said publicly, that they would resort to force, if necessary, to effect a change in the policy of the Federal Administration, in case they should fail in their efforts to elect General Harrison to the Presidency. And what in England, in France, throughout all Europe, but armed soldiery, sustains the existing order of things? We know the conservative spirit. It fights against all reforms; it would hold the human race back to the past, and never suffer it to take a single step forward. Hitherto, it has been only on the battle-field; a Marathon, a Plataea, a Marston Moor, a Naseby, a Bunker's Hill, a Saratoga, or a Yorktown, that Humanity has conquered her power to advance. The Past has always stood in the gate, and forbid the Future to enter; and it has been only in mortal encounter, that the Future has as yet ever been able to force its entrance. It may be different in the future; we hope it will be. We would rather be found, on this subject, a false prophet than a true one. But we fear the age of peace has not yet dawned. Commerce has indeed spread her meshes all over the world, but she cannot hold it quiet. We need but glance at Europe, Asia, Africa, and even our own country, at the present moment, to see that no permanent peace has as yet been established. Everywhere are warlike preparations going on, and our speculators are already beginning to count



on their means of turning the coming contest to their own profit. If a general war should now break out, it will involve all quarters of the globe, and it will be in the end more than a war between nations. It will resolve itself into a social war, a war between two social elements ; between the aristocracy and the democracy, between the people and their masters. It will be a terrible war ! Already does it lower on the horizon, and, though the storm may be long in gathering, it will roll in massy folds over the whole heavens, and break in fury upon the earth. Stay it, ye who can. For ourselves, we merely stand on the watch-towers, and report what we see. Would that we had a different report. But the war, if it comes, will not be brought about by reformers, but by conservatives, in order to keep the people out of their rights ; and on the heads of conservatives, then, must fall the blame.

A powerful effort has been made, by the leaders of a political party, to use our article on the laboring classes to the prejudice of the present administration. It has endeavored to make the administration and its friends responsible for our doctrines. If the whig leaders had presented our doctrines truly, and then said that these doctrines are the simple logical results of the acknowledged principles of the democratic party, we should have been content, for we say as much ourselves. What we complain of in our whig friends, is their gross perversion of our views, and after having, by misrepresentation or misinterpretation, concocted a set of doctrines, as abhorrent to us as to themselves, then charging those "horrible doctrines" upon the administration. The doctrines, published in whig newspapers and electioneering hand-bills, resemble ours about as much as night resembles day. They are, in fact, not sufficiently like ours to be their caricatures. It is obviously unjust, then, to charge these doctrines, either upon us, or upon our political friends. Of this injustice, the whigs have been guilty. But, it is no matter. The truth generally comes out at last, and they, who have mis-

represented it, or sought to keep it back, are in general the principal sufferers. We would much rather be slandered than slander, be lied about than lie. Perhaps the day will come, when politicians will learn to feel the same, and that a man is bound to carry into all his political discussions and exertions, the same candor, sincerity, and strict integrity, generally insisted on as requisite in private life.

The abolition of hereditary property is a measure we have contemplated for a long time. We expected to be censured for proposing it; but we confess that we did not expect to find our countrymen quite so much surprised by its novelty. The question has been discussed before; but our countrymen seem not to have known it, probably because it was not discussed in England. However, some questions are discussed out of England; for there is some little intellectual, and, perhaps, moral power, besides what is indigenous in the Island of Great Britain. We expected the proposition would startle; but we confess that we did not expect to find people uniting to condemn what each one, taken singly, will uphold. We have never met a man who would not say, that he believed it a serious injury to a young man to inherit a fortune. We have heard our rich men, very generally, remark, that they regard it as by no means desirable to leave a large inheritance to their children. We have often been told by rich men, when we have referred to the destitute situation in which we ourselves were left, when quite young, that our "poverty was the richest legacy our father could have left us." Now, here is admitted nearly all we contend for. We believe it a serious injury to inherit a fortune, but to receive on setting out in life a moderate capital, as a ground on which our industry may display itself, we hold to be highly desirable. Our plan avoids the evil and secures the good.

Some have undertaken to accuse us of borrowing our notions from the French Radicals. The first knowledge we had of the views of the French Radi-

cals, we obtained from their exhibition, as the original from which we copied. Our countrymen dislike whatever is French, and our conservatives like whatever is English. We will close this article, therefore, by subjoining a document, placed in our hands a few days since, by a gentleman from Liverpool. The document appears to be a sort of circular, sent out by an association, composed, we believe, of gentlemen of some eminence. The proposition it contains is as bold as ours, although, in some important features, quite different. It may be well to add, that the doctrine of this circular has been substantially advocated by one of the London Quarterly Reviews. As it comes from England, we have no doubt that it will be quite acceptable to our conservative friends, who, just at this moment, are doing, consciously or unconsciously, their utmost, to bring this country into subjection to the English bankers and stock-jobbers.

EDITOR.

### NO. 2, BY THE LAND REDEMPTION SOCIETY.

The flagrant injustice of the Corn Laws will induce the people to look more closely into first principles than they have ever done as yet. — MORGAN.

#### *The Land of England belongs to the People of England.*

For God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness, and let them \* have dominion over all the earth. — GENESIS.

And land shall not be sold forever, for the land is mine, saith the Lord. — LEVITICUS, xxv. 23.

The riches of a state arise from the labor of the people. — MONTESQUIEU.

The state owes to every citizen a proper nourishment, convenient clothing, and a kind of life compatible with health. — MONTESQUIEU.

Labor is the source of wealth, it is the source of the revenue of the state, and of the rents of the landlords. — THOMPSON.

There is no foundation in nature, or natural law, why a set of words on parchment should give to any one the dominion of land. — BLACKSTONE.

No one is able to produce a charter from heaven, or has any better title to a particular possession of land than his neighbor. — PALEY.

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\* God said *them*, and not a portion, or particular caste, or body of them, called landlords.



Sic vos non vobis mellificatis, apes. — VIRGIL.

Have the landlords dominion in their lands? or do they lawfully possess only the use of them? Can they do what they like with their lands? — COBBETT.

If the land of England does not belong to the people of England, to whom does it belong?

Is it not evident, that if the air could have been appropriated, it would have been parcelled out like the land?

Is not land the immediate gift of God, like air or water? \* Is it not different from all other things useful to man, seeing that it is not the product of industry?

In thickly-peopled countries, heavy rents are demanded from labor; these rents are spent chiefly in ostentation, riotous excess, debauchery, and gambling. In proportion as a nation becomes skilful and numerous, does rent or the monopoly price of land increase, thus supplying more ample funds for the landlord's follies.†

What do we propose? Is it to take land from one individual, and give it to another? No. Is it to rob the living possessors? No. Might not the following plan be adopted?

COULD NOT THE STATE HOLD THE LAND FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL?

MIGHT NOT COMMISSIONERS BE ELECTED, IN WHOM ALL LAND MIGHT BE VESTED? ‡

MIGHT NOT THE PARLIAMENTARY VOTERS ELECT THESE COMMISSIONERS? §

Might not the rental of the land in England, (on the death

\* Rent paid to water companies is for steam engines, pipes, &c., not for the water.

† Taxation may be reduced as population and wealth increase, but rent must rise and become a most serious tax on labor in thickly-peopled countries. Rent being the creation of the industry of all, must be devoted to the benefit of all. At home, and in our colonies, the fee simple of the land is sold forever and ever; now, no generation can sell the land forever, as the land belongs to the next generation, when it grows up to manhood.

‡ This is not new. In Liverpool, the rental of the town, (*the corporate estate*,) belongs to the public, (*the municipal voters*,) who elect commissioners, (*town councillors*,) every year. This estate, £50,000 per annum, is devoted by law to the public good; as also are crown lands, estates of the Greenwich Hospital, of the Universities, &c.

§ The tenure of land is of more importance than political institutions. If taxation were annihilated to-morrow, rent would exist and increase. In America, where population increases, land will become more valuable, and a landed aristocracy will come into existence, who will constantly be plotting against popular rights. The present absurd tenure of land in the United States will overthrow their otherwise excellent political constitution.

of the present holders, and their sons born before a given date,) be spent on \*

1. EDUCATION — of all, without distinction of rank or sect.
2. ON COMMUNICATION — railroads, harbors, &c.
3. ON DEFENCE — army, navy, police.†
4. ON JUSTICE — on courts of law, always open, and without charge.
5. ON RECREATION — gardens, museums, theatres, libraries; on improvements of towns and villages.
6. ON EMIGRATION — fitting out first rate vessels to carry out those desirous of trying their fortunes in a new land, free of charge.

Would not this expenditure of rent be better than its present appropriation to the absurd caprices, vicious indulgencies, and gambling propensities of our landed aristocracy? ‡

Is it not the fact, that previous to Cromwell, the landlords held the land of the King, as representative of the state? Our proposition, then, is not a novelty, but a return to an old system.

The earth and its products belong to the living, and not to the dead; therefore no man has a right to dictate the possession of the land after his death. The law allows him; but our proposal is to alter the law.

\* The right to leave land to nephews or more distant heirs, to be abolished at once, or in a few years.

† Taxation would thus merge into rent. Rent we cannot destroy, any more than wages or profits; we can, however, appropriate it to the state. The discovery of the great principle of representation renders this possible and easy.

‡ Last year, a young nobleman retired to Boulogne, after gambling away £30,000 per annum, (the earnings of hundreds of tenantry, and thousands of laborers); a Duke is building a conservatory covering an acre of ground; and another with £200,000 a year, is going to the continent to recruit; a third, in Staffordshire, is wasting the hard-earned rents of his tenantry in the most whimsical conceits.





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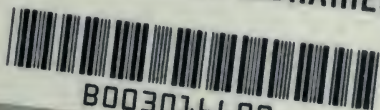
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